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CHRIST'S MINISTRY and PASSION IN ART

Rev. Harold Francis Branch, D.D.

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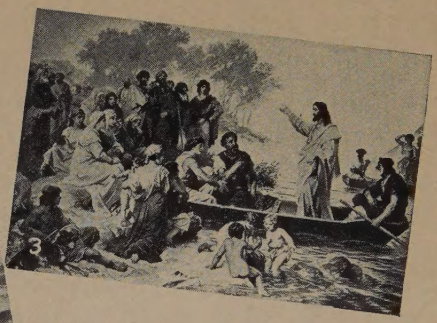
CHRIST'S MINISTRY AND PASSION IN ART

HAROLD FRANCIS BRANCH, D. D.



Courtesy Gramstorff Bros., Inc., Malden, Mass.

1. "Christ Walking on the Water"; 2. "The Flight Into Egypt"; 3. "Christ Teaching from a Boat"; 4. "Christ and the Fishermen"; 5. "Christ and the Rich Young Ruler."

CHRIST'S MINISTRY AND PASSION IN ART

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INSPIRING AND INSTRUCTIVE SERMONS ON THE WORLD'S RELIGIOUS MASTERPIECES. BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF THE ARTISTS, TECHNIQUE OF THE PICTURES, HOW THEY CAME TO BE PAINTED AND THE GREAT SPIRITUAL LESSONS THEY TEACH.

BY

REV. HAROLD FRANCIS BRANCH, D.D.,
Albany Park Presbyterian Church, Chicago

1894

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CONTENTS

Introduction by
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PREFACE

PART I—CHRIST'S MINISTRY IN ART

I. "CHRIST AND THE RICH YOUNG RULER" 15
(From the Painting by Hofmann)

II. "CHRIST TEACHING FROM A BOAT" . 23
(From the Painting by Hofmann)

III. "THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT" . . 35
(From the Painting by Plockhorst)

IV. "THE GOOD SHEPHERD" . . . 47
(From the Painting by Plockhorst)

V. "CHRIST WALKING ON THE WATER" . 59
(From the Painting by Plockhorst)

VI. "CHRIST AND THE FISHERMEN" . . 69
(From the Painting by Zimmerman)

VII. "THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD" . . 76
(From the Painting by Hunt)

VIII. "THE ANGELUS" 87
(From the Painting by Millet)

PART II—CHRIST'S PASSION IN ART

IX. "THE TEMPTATION" 101
(From the Painting by Hofmann)

X. "CHRIST'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM" 110
(From the Painting by Plockhorst)

CONTENTS—Continued

XI. "THE LAST SUPPER" 122
(From the Painting by Da Vinci)

XII. "CHRIST BEFORE PILATE" . . . 132
(From the Painting by Munkacsy)

XIII. "THE CRUCIFIXION" 145
(From the Painting by Munkacsy)

XIV. "THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS" . 157
(From the Painting by Rubens)

XV. "HE IS RISEN" 168
(From the Painting by Plockhorst)

INTRODUCTION

A great master of the modern pulpit has described preaching as "picture thinking." The task of the religious teacher is to paint a picture of some great truth in such form and color that one cannot pass it by. "Where there is no vision the people perish" might be interpreted to mean, "Where people see no picture of the ideal, they perish." If Moses "endured as seeing Him that is invisible," then the more we come to see the eternal truth behind the outward symbol, the greater spiritual endurance we shall have—and this is an age which calls for a great deepening of spiritual reserves if we are to meet the shock of materialism and the corroding power of selfish luxury.

In this book the author has taken great pictures already painted and focused new light upon them. If the flower in the crannied wall may tell what God and man is, how much more may these picture-flowers of the world's great artists reveal God's truth in terms of pictorial beauty! For no artist can be a mere materialist. His very art compels him to look beneath the outer symbol to the inner and deeper meaning. Dr. Branch becomes an artist, too, as he helps us see the truth beneath the symbol.

ALBERT W. PALMER.

First Congregational Church,
Oak Park, Illinois.

DEDICATED

TO

MY DEAR MOTHER,

HATTIE C. BRANCH.

PREFACE

There are few sources more rich in suggestion for the minister than the great art of the world. The great painters have been, almost without exception, men of deep moral purpose and burning heart. They have been great preachers who set their sermons down upon canvas.

Take from the art of the world the paintings which have had their inspiration, directly or indirectly, from the life and words of Christ and you would rob the earth of its most precious art possessions. The skill of the great artists has been laid reverently at the feet of the Master.

Great pictures are great teachers. They are rich in spiritual truths. Great pictures are great companions. Their steady, silently eloquent message steals imperceptibly into the heart. They are tireless preachers. They speak their message over and over again. They influence us in ways and measure unrealized by ourselves. They do not rant. They do not beat the air. They do not grow discouraged. They do not become angry. They never rest. They are wonderful preachers. Wise is the preacher who studies them. Happy is the congregation which is led into their truth and beauty by a reverent and appreciative interpretation.

The story is told of a mother who visited her son in his college dormitory. She was pained at some of the pictures she found upon the walls of his room. But, because she was very wise, she said nothing. After her return home, however, she sent to him a beautiful copy of Hofmann's "Head of Christ," with the request that he hang it in a

prominent place on the wall of his room. A few months later she again visited him. The picture of Christ was in its place. The other pictures, which had caused her distress, were not to be seen. Quietly she turned to her son and said, "Thank you, dear, for hanging up the picture I sent you. Where are all those other pictures I saw when I was last here?" Looking his mother directly in the eye, he said to her, "Mother, dear, they did not look right—on the wall there—with Him!"

I have heard G. Campbell Morgan say that after his marriage his father came to see him and, after looking over the new home, said to him, "Son, there is not a single picture in your home that would distinguish you as a believer in and follower of the Lord Jesus Christ!" That is true of too many Christian homes. It is a serious loss. The quietly repeated and sweetly insistent message of great pictures has a profound influence upon child life. An inland family, with no sailors in the line for generations back, has sent all their sons to sea, and wondered why!—until some one called their attention to a magnificent picture of a graceful ship, under full sail, plowing her way through the mighty deep. Day after day that picture had been preaching its message into the hearts of the boys of that home—and hanging there over the fireplace, it finally sent them to sea.

In these days the preacher is no longer "The Parson"—which is the old word meaning THE PERSON. Time was when he was just that; the only person in the community who was well educated and qualified to speak upon things of cultural and intellectual interest. That time is forever gone in America. There are in every congregation today, leaders in their various fields, much more widely and accurately informed in their particular work than the preacher can ever hope to be. The

wise minister, therefore, confines himself strictly to the field in which he is a specialist, and calls to his aid in that field every ally and supporting voice. He will do well to study great art in this connection. He will find no more true and eloquent ally than the matchless paintings of the great artists.

These artists were truly inspired. After the delivery of the sermon on Da Vinci's "Last Supper," a very scholarly man came to the author at the close of the service and said, "I never knew before there was so much in that picture. What a preacher Da Vinci was!" Exactly!

The addresses presented here have all been delivered in the author's own church. They have met with a gracious acceptance not only on the part of the regular congregation, but also on the part of art circles and committees. He presents them not as perfect specimens, but only as suggestions of the way the matter may be treated. Other men will have other methods. It was found helpful to place in the hands of each one present a copy of the picture under discussion. The copy was taken home by the listener, and in some cases framed. The author is convinced that this method is effective in driving home to the hearts of men in a beautiful and lasting way great spiritual truths. He sends out into the world this child of his brain and heart with the prayer that God will bless it to the salvation of immortal souls.

H. F. B.

The Minister's Study
Albany Park Presbyterian Church
Chicago, Illinois.

MINISTERS DESIRING COPIES OF THE PICTURES DISCUSSED IN THIS VOLUME, FOR DISTRIBUTION TO THEIR CONGREGATIONS, MAY SECURE THEM IN QUANTITIES, AT VERY REASONABLE RATES.

PART I

CHRIST'S MINISTRY IN ART

CHRIST'S MINISTRY IN ART

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CHAPTER I

"CHRIST AND THE RICH YOUNG RULER"

(From the Painting by Hofmann)

SCRIPTURE LESSON: *Matthew 19:16-22.*

Browning has declared that art remains the one way possible of speaking truth. It is certain that in this picture Hofmann has presented truth in a most vivid and lasting way.

One of the leading muscians of Chicago has made for himself an enviable reputation by explaining in a simple way to his audience the thought and purpose of the composer before he renders the selection. He tells them what to listen for and what the composer meant to convey by a particular strain of melody. In the light of the explanation, the delight and profit of his audience is doubled. The same method of procedure is valuable in dealing with great pictures. The artist is almost always seeking to impress some vital truth. A great picture is a great sermon in itself. It is not something pretty at which one should gaze, baby-like, as at a bright object. These artists with which we deal in this book have for their deep purpose the imparting of

great inspiration which will make beautiful lives. For, as Sir Martin Conway says, "A picture in a gallery might delight us for a time, but infinitely more delightful is the art which we own ourselves; that we may have when we please, and need not go anywhere to look at."

Anecdotes of Hofmann.

Heinrich Hofmann was born at Darmstadt, Germany, March 19, 1824, and died in 1902 in Dresden, where he had become a professor in the University. He was a member of a large family. His parents were profoundly religious folk, and the daily reading of the Scriptures in his home was a familiar sight to his young eyes. He was very early impressed by the beautiful pictures in the large Bible from which his father habitually read. This influence made itself evident in his later life, for, while his paintings cover a large field and while he drew from mythology, literature and nature, he is best remembered by his Bible scenes, especially by his paintings from the Life of Christ. He is the artist of the picture, "Christ and the Adulteress." "Christ in the Temple" is from his brush. "Christ's Sermon on the Lake" and "Christ Taken Prisoner" are among his most widely known pictures. Hofmann was an exponent of what is known as "the new idealism" in art. He was both a poet and a painter. The poetic sense is manifest in all of his work. The picture before us was painted as a direct result of inspiration received from reading the account of the rich young ruler given so vividly in Matthew 19:16-22.

The Technique of the Picture.

This picture of Hofmann's is the only notable modern portrayal of this particular episode in the life of

Christ. It is truly Hofmannian in style. He delights in attractions of color. His landscapes abound in reds, blues and yellows. His woodland scenes, his rose-bushes, his timber-girded lakes are all done with a compelling and charming profusion of rich color. In this picture, the robe of the rich young man and his headpiece and scarf furnish opportunity for the exercise of this inclination and ability in Hofmann. They are gorgeous. The bit of landscape in the distance is also richly done. While Hofmann was not as technically expert as Leonardo, still he surpassed in this field. Here the figures are half length, against a heavy masonry background. This head of Christ is the mature counterpart of the head of the youth, in the picture, "Christ in the Temple." It is ranked by experts as the best of all of Hofmann's figures of Christ. The face of the Saviour is a three-quarter view. The artist has made a sharp and significant contrast in the character of the clothing of the Saviour and the young man.

What Is in the Picture?

I

NEED

Here is need as only the Orient can represent it. The poor, just around the corner of the massive stone pillar, are shown in all their desperate want. The helpless cripple with twisted leg and torturous crutch; the woman with her face lined with suffering and dark with fears, are there speaking eloquently of the almost unimaginable need. We who are in the Occident know nothing of despair or suffering and deep distress comparable to that which is daily experienced in the Orient. There the beggars stand with flies clustered around their eyes;

there are crippled bodies and blighted childhood. It is that which Hofmann portrays so vividly here. It is said that this picture was the inspiration of Dr. Frank Mason North's hymn:

"Where cross the crowded ways of life,
Where sound the cries of race and clan,
Above the noise of selfish strife,
We hear thy voice, O Son of Man.

In haunts of wretchedness and need,
On shadowed thresholds dark with fears,
From paths where hide the lures of greed,
We catch the vision of Thy tears.

From tender childhood's helplessness,
From woman's grief, man's burdened toil,
From famished souls, from sorrow's stress,
Thy heart has never known recoil.

The cup of water given for Thee
Still holds the freshness of Thy grace;
Yet long these multitudes to see
The sweet compassion of Thy face.

O Master, from the mountain side,
Make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
Among these restless throngs abide;
O tread the city's streets again;

Till sons of men shall learn Thy love,
And follow where Thy feet have trod;
Till glorious from Thy heaven above,
Shall come the City of our God."

Here is need in its most desperate and appealing form.

II

OPPORTUNITY FOR REAL LIFE

Here is opportunity for real life. Jesus knew, and all of those familiar with Jewish tradition and custom know, that this young man had become

ruler because of his wealth. Certainly there is no desire to slander this young man. The fact is that Jewish tradition, custom and sentiment declared that only old men might rule in Israel. It was through the skillful use of his wealth that this young man had achieved his place of leadership. Now, Jesus knew perfectly well that there are some things in the universe which cannot be forced nor hurried. One cannot hasten the bloom of the rose nor by force hurry along the flush of dawn. No more can one bring to maturity the ripening of the heart and soul. Hofmann skillfully shows the Master indicating with His hands these desperately needy folk, while He turns upon the young man a face of pleading and most earnestly invites him to take part in work which will introduce him to real life. He lays before this young man the only way in which his soul can reach that beauty of perfect development for which God intended it. It was as though He said, "My young man, come with me, together we will heal the sick, minister to the diseased, bring to life the dead, both physically and spiritually." What an invitation, how graciously given, how affectionately urged! What an honor! He refused; the tragedy of it! And in refusing he turned his back upon his golden opportunity for the development and winning of his own soul, for in our life with our fellowmen and our ministry to them, we find and learn to know the Christ.

"Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An Angel writing in a book of gold:
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the Presence in his room he said,
'What writest thou?' The Vision raised its head,

And with a look made of all sweet accord
Answered, 'The names of those who love the Lord,'
'And is mine one?' said Abou. 'Nay, not so,'
Replied the Angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerily still; and said, 'I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow-men.'

The Angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blessed,
And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest!"

III

CONTEST BETWEEN SPIRIT AND FLESH

Here is burning contest between the spiritual and the fleshly. A recent English critic has declared that our people are almost insane in their wild pursuit of show, equipage and sensuous delights. The words fall harshly on our ears, largely perhaps because they come from foreign lips. It is always difficult to accept graciously a severe criticism from an outsider. There is much truth, however, in the words of this Englishman. We are outdoing Lucullus, the Sabarite. In our eating, drinking and celebration, especially at New Year's and the great national holidays, we are putting to shame all that is noble within us. We are paying some of our chefs salaries which make the remuneration of our judges of the Supreme Court, educators and ministers of the Gospel seem paltry in comparison. The chef of a great New York hotel is said to be in despair because he can concoct no new mixtures; he can devise no new decorations. There seem to be no new combinations of meats. A recent visitor sat at one of these feasts, and the only thing he missed was the emetic and the second meal. It is reported that some of the epicureans of France have devised an electric apparatus which connects the

body of the diner with the food on the plate and imparts to the edibles a peculiar piquancy of taste. Of course the great difficulty with this is that the next day, without the electrical stimulation, everything is utterly tasteless.

How tragic it is! Our vain and ceaseless effort to stimulate a jaded sense, trying to enjoy life and find happiness through physical indulgences. Hofmann has pictured here in unforgettable way this eternal conflict between that which is high and that which is low; that which is spiritual and that which is fleshly; that which is selfish and that which is altruistic. On the face of the young man can be seen the evidence of this terrific internal battle. With head inclined in thought, one hand upon his hip and the other upon the table, he listens well and thinks deeply. The fight is on in his heart. Here he has an opportunity to win life by overcoming himself.

IV

DESTINY

Here is destiny. It is a most tragic and gripping thing. This is the hour of choice for this rich young man. He is the only one of whom it is said, "looking upon him, the Saviour loved him." He had all the graces of the intellectual; he was cultured and refined. More than that, he was in earnest, for, as one record tells us, "he came running." He had already achieved prominence. He was a ruler, but he missed the honor of the centuries. He held on to his bauble and lost his opportunity to become a member of what some one has called "The Beloved Society." In his following Christ an untold blessing would have been his, but something strangely hardened his heart. The jewel was thrown

away; the gold slipped through his fingers. Dante places him among the exiles of eternity. You remember in his "Divine Comedy," as under the leadership of Virgil they pause, Dante says, "Who is that nameless one, gnawed with remorse?" and Virgil replies, "Let us flee! That is the youth who made the great refusal!" This young man deliberately turned his back on the high way. In the face of the best, he chose only the good, and that is fatal for any life. He saw the best, but, like Guenevere of whom Tennyson tells, he failed to love the best.

He turned away and Jesus did not call him back! Therein lies the tragedy. Why did not Jesus call him and renew with him His pleading and, in argument, point out to him again and again, if necessary, the advantages of the way He recommended? That is not the way the Saviour does. Opportunity knocks. We have the ability to accept or reject. Christ will not constrain us. We are not forced against our will. We may turn from Him and He will not call us back. God help those of us who read this not to turn away, not to make the great refusal, but rather to make the great acceptance.

Chapter II

"CHRIST TEACHING FROM A BOAT"

(From the Painting by Hofmann)

Scripture Lesson: *Matthew 13:1-9.*

The reader is referred to the sermon, "Christ and the Rich Young Ruler" for a discussion of the life and work of the artist, Hofmann.

Most of his painting was a religious nature and this picture, "Christ Teaching from a Boat," is one of his most widely known and most admired. The landscape, the beauty of the lake and the shore, give us a truly typical Galilean scene. In His time, the shores of this lake were densely populated. What are now ruins and unhabited stretches were then teeming with the life of thousands of people. This group, gathered around the boat in which our Saviour stands, is just such a company as might have been drawn together at any hour of the day by a speaker in Galilee, during the time of Christ. Here are the little children, the women, and the ever present questioning scribes, with folded arms and piercing look. In the left hand corner the blind man is being led to Christ by the little child, who indicates the figure of the Saviour with outstretched hand. Blindness is a very prevalent disease in the Orient, due to the heat and glare possibly, but more directly, due to the absence of sanitation, and to the utter ignorance of medical measures for the relief of

eye suffering. Our concern, however, is more directly with our Saviour and His pulpit.

This pulpit of Christ's was

I

A YIELDING PULPIT

It rose and fell with the washing of the waves. It gave this way and that. In this it was typical of what every Christian life should be. It was typical of what every Christian pulpit should be. We live in the world. We are a part of the social order. We must not retire from it. Our Saviour in Gethsemane prayed not that the Father should take His disciples out of the world but that He should keep them unspotted from the world. We must remain in the world. Our part is that of salt: purifying, sweetening, saving. The time will come, to be sure, when according to the teaching of Paul, the church will be taken from the world, but meanwhile our duty is to remain, and, by our influence and the spirit of Christ dwelling within us, to uplift, to heal, to guide, and to bless. We must beware of sternness, of harshness. The pulpit of Christ was a yielding pulpit. The apparently yielding, but quiet and sweetly persistent life conquers. Dr. Robert E. Speer said in a recent address, "Love is like a ball, not with sharp angular corners, but with smooth round surface, which goes easily and quietly into every corner." Where Christianity has conquered, it has done so through the power of love. There are moments, of course, when preaching must sound a note of stern warning, and of clear and distinct denunciation. Christ condemned in no uncertain terms the hypocrisy and duplicity of evil men. But the fact remains that the Christian life, by sweet and gentle persuasiveness, breaks down barriers. What the

stern, harsh wind is unable to accomplish, the quiet and gentle rays of the sun do accomplish—the man peels off his coat!

This is illustrated beautifully in the life of John G. Paton. Upon his arrival in the South Seas, he declares that his almost irresistible impulse was to denounce and destroy, with abrupt physical force, the heathen images; and to sweep through like a devastating fire, cleansing by main power, and in fierce wrath, the corrupt and unspeakably depraved life about him. He didn't do it! With quiet love and gracious example, he gathered about him a group of men, and led them, like little children, step by step; congratulating them upon each advance made; encouraging them at every fresh display of understanding and of willingness; restraining his impatience at their slowness; putting up with much that he knew to be dreadfully imperfect, while they were congratulating themselves upon their perfection! So, year after year, by the subtle influence of love, by the yielding power of his own personality, by the incessant urge and drive of his Christian love, he lifted them to Christian manhood and womanhood! In a different situation the same work is being done by Rev. Wm. J. DuBourdieu, and others, in the midst of Chicago's slums.

God pity the minister who has not learned the secret of a yielding pulpit and leadership. We must yield as to minor points. We must be willing, as Boreham says, to "Swallow fagots crosswise." We m u s t t a k e some things "sitting down!" The preacher who insists on *having* his own way in every circumstance and under every condition, will soon be found *going* his own way with no one to follow.

This pulpit of Christ's was

II

AN ANCHORED PULPIT

While it yielded, it did not drift. I call your attention to this most directly. "This one thing I do!" "I know!" These words of affirmation and of triumphant confidence Paul caught from the spirit of Christ. This pulpit was not carried hither and thither at the mercy of every chance tide. While it yielded, it was not at the mercy of the current. It knew goals and held steadily to them. Perfect steadfastness is entirely consistent with perfect reasonableness and sweetness. "If a man is in the right, he can afford to hold his temper. If he is in the wrong, he cannot afford to lose it." The message of the pulpit must be a definite message. There must be in it no note of uncertainty. To be anchored, we need to know. To know, we need to study the Bible. Christ knew the Scripture! I am putting my finger, at this point, upon one of the secrets of the lack of power in the present church. I can speak only for my own denomination, but I am confident my brethren will count it no slander when I say that 80 per cent. of our Presbyterians would pass but a pitiful examination in the Bible. If a fair knowledge of the Bible is requisite for spiritual life, 80 per cent. of our people stand ready to die! The false cults, the foolish isms, the fads of religious idiocy drag off these silly sheep into the delusions of the devil and the ways of death. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." (Isaiah 1: 3.) And because they do not know and because they do not consider, they are, as Paul said, "Led captive laden with sin." The fault does not lie entirely with the preachers. In our Sunday

Schools we are neglecting the Shorter Catechism. We are getting away from the stern, stiff, meat and drink of Christian instruction. We are rearing a generation on milk and water. Instead of grounding our boys and girls in the classical expression of our Faith, we are telling them pleasant little stories about fair play and generous division of candy with playmates. It is all very entertaining and all very beautiful, but it is *entirely inadequate.* Character, strong and staunch, and rugged, character that can face the terrific temptations of our modern life *is not built in this way.*

I am not one who hankers after "the good old days." As a matter of fact, there have never been any such days. But I *am* calling attention to the fact that we of the modern day are in imminent danger of losing certain important emphases that were stressed in the days that are past. A thing is not valuable simply because it is old. Neither is it valuable simply because it is new. There are some values in the past that we must retain, and there are some things in the present of which we must beware. The Christian faith has an intellectual as well as an emotional basis. A man whose heart only is touched may be very warm, but he is dreadfully shaky. A man whose intellect only is touched may be very solid, but he is horribly cold. We must touch both the heart and the intellect. The first to give warmth and life and vitality. The second to give strength and conviction and permanence. The pulpit of Christ was an anchored pulpit. His preaching appealed both to the mind and to the heart.

This pulpit was also

III

A HUMAN PULPIT

It was within earshot of all the throng. He was in full and complete touch with them. One recalls the story of Dr. Stoors, of New York, calling one hour in the lowest slums of the great city, the next in the palace of the millionaire on the avenue. Dr. Coffin, of New York, called the other day at a certain millionaire's home and inquired for a girl. The butler, with haughty demeanor, ordered him to the servants' entrance. He quietly went and interviewed the servant girl, who was a member of his church. The next day he came back and again knocked at the front door. The butler was on the point of ordering him the second time to the servants' entrance, but Dr. Coffin quietly said he had come to see one of his members, Mrs. Blank, the owner of the property, and the woman whose name gave value to the check received by the butler. The church is for all classes. The Christian religion is universal in its appeal.

Christ was often exhausted after His day's work. (Mark 4: 36.) The individual who thinks that it is easy to come in contact with men, to listen to and sympathize with them in their troubles, to pray with them in their illnesses, to take upon his heart their burdens, to mourn with them in loss and in sin, has never thought deeply. It is exhausting work. But it is the crown and glory of our Holy Religion.

After a day spent in contact with the young men of a certain school, Henry Drummond leaned against the mantelpiece, and said, in anguish of heart and with haggard face, "Oh! the sins of these men! I must change my clothing and bathe. I feel that their very confessions have contaminated me." It

is terrific work. Every minister who is doing his work knows that it is. But it is holy work. It was the work of our Saviour. It was the work Christ was doing in this picture. If the pulpit, if the church of Christ, if the ministry of Christ, retires and walks in paths removed from the multitude, then it is doomed. The tragedy of Russia is due in large part to the spirit of aloofness and of withdrawal which, for the last three hundred years, has been permeating the Greek Orthodox Church. Drawing their robes in holy (?) disdain about them, the priests passed, in lofty superiority, among the people, utterly removed from them. Because of that Christ has brought the Greek Orthodox Church of Russia down to the dust in humiliation, and has set upon her the red heel of Bolshevism.

A friend of the writer was offered a lucrative position as private chaplain. He consulted an older and wiser minister about the matter and received the following advice: "Son, you let some one else be the private chaplain. If you want to make your life count for Christ, stay close to the great, throbbing, needy, sinful heart of the multitude, and preach to *them* until you drop."

This pulpit of Christ's was

IV

A DIVINE PULPIT

It was open to heaven. There bent over Him the blue of God's own sky. Nothing intervened between Him and the throne. Here is the secret of His strength. Here is the source of His inspiration.

We, like Him, must draw our power direct from God on High. That is where Eleanor Chestnut got it. One of the most homely and attractive girls that ever entered Park College. Desperately poor. So

temperamentally defective she was that she resented, with bitterness of heart, every attempt made to help her. For three years she was a great problem to the faculty and to the Dean of Women. Early in her Senior year, however, a revival swept through the school, and she gave her heart to Christ, and determined that she would become a medical missionary. With the help of friends she was enabled to take her medical course after securing her A.B. degree from Park. She went to China. Years passed during which she did valiant service. The Boxer Rebellion came and went. One day a liner drew up at the dock at San Francisco. A man came down the gangplank and asked one of the wharf laborers the name of the nearest church. The laborer didn't know. The man clambered into a taxi and instructed the driver to take him to the nearest church. He knocked on the minister's door and in response to the minister's greeting, said, "I would like to join this church." The minister looked at him in amazement. He said, "We do not ordinarily receive people into the church at 10.00 o'clock Tuesday morning. However, we may make an exception in your case. Come in and talk with me." The man sat down and began his story. Said he, "I have been a globe trotter. I have never had much use for Christianity. I have just come from China. I was held prisoner there for a time by the Boxers. I saw there, recently, a group of women missionaries making their way from one part of the compound to another. The group was surrounded quickly by a mob of Chinese who hurled stones at the women. There was in the mob a little Chinese boy who held in his hand a stone which he was preparing to throw at these women. As he stood in the front rank of the group, his forehead was cut by a stone

that had missed the women and had struck him. Then," said the man, "I saw one of those women stoop over and from the hem of her underskirt tear a strip of white cloth which she used as a bandage to tie around the head of this Chinese lad—this lad who held in his own hand a stone which he had been preparing to cast. As this woman was engaged in binding up the wound of this boy, she was struck down and killed. Now, sir," said the man, laying his hand on the knee of the pastor, "if that's what Christianity is, and if that's what it makes people do, I want to be a Christian."

What was the power that made Eleanor Chestnut able to do that thing? It was the power of God direct from heaven! Her life, given over to Him, was controlled by Him, and inspired from Him. Today there stands on Park College Campus a beautiful women's dormitory called Eleanor Chestnut Hall, dedicated to the memory of this homely girl whose life and whose face became beautiful through the power of Jesus Christ. The writer of these lines spoke recently at Buena Vista College. He learned then that the girlhood home of Eleanor Chestnut is at Waterloo, Iowa. *The little boy whose head she bound up is now the Christian General of China, whose name figures so prominently in our news dispatches, Feng-Hu-Siang!* The Lord moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform! The last act of this heroic Christian woman may have untold measure and influence in the destiny of this great nation through the life of Feng-Hu-Siang.

Every Christian must keep his life open to heaven. Every pulpit should be directly connected thereto. And if men's lives are being changed by our preaching, it is because our pulpits are so connected. We depend upon heaven for power. "I believe in the

Holy Ghost," is a good thing for every minister to say as he goes into the pulpit. God is wonderful in power today through the Lord Jesus Christ. (One of the best stories of the life of Eleanor Chestnut is found in "Servants of the King," by Robert E. Speer.)

The writer has heard his grandfather, who was a Presbyterian minister, tell the story that he had received from the lips of Christmas Evans. Christmas Evans was perhaps the greatest Welsh preacher that ever lived. The writer's grandfather, a Welshman, was closely associated with him in his work. Evans used to tell how the Gadarene, out of whom Christ cast the devils, returned to his home. This man had been dwelling among the tombs, wild, insane, a menace to the countryside, a burden to himself and a terror to all others. Christ healed him, and the Gadarene started home. His wife and children caught sight of him as he came down the road. Hurriedly calling the children into the house, the mother pulled down the shades, locked the doors and windows and said, "Children, don't make a noise. Be very still, your father is insane. He will harm you." They held their breath. Then little Mary, with childish curiosity, peeked slyly through the window and said, "Mother, that isn't father. Father used to come bounding down the way. This man is walking quietly." "Hush, Mary," said the mother, quickly drawing her away. "It may be your father." They heard the gate latch. They heard a step on the porch. A hand was laid on the door knob, but it was locked. Then, says Evans, they heard a voice. It was a new voice. It was strange and wonderful in its sweetness. It was the voice the mother had heard when he had asked her to be his wife. It was the same sweet, wonderful

tone that he had used when God gave to them their first little child. It amazed her. She heard this voice say, "Mary, let me in. I have met Jesus."

These things happen when a pulpit is open to heaven. This is not an unusual occurrence when the lives of professedly Christian people are fully consecrated to Him.

"I have a new daddy," said a golden haired little girl to the writer as she came up one evening in a Chicago mission at the close of the service. She led by the finger a man whom he, at first, did not recognize. Lookingly closely upon him, however, the writer discovered that it was a man who, a month before, had given his heart to Jesus Christ at the close of one of the author's services there. The child's testimony was marvelously simple, and simply marvelous. "I have a new daddy." That is the power of Christ let loose in the hearts of men. It is the power of God working through our pulpits and through our lives.

One would like to say more here of what is so clear in the picture—little children playing in innocent joy and happy delight in the shadow of the outstretched hands of Christ. He it is who is the child's Friend. Under Him childhood is always protected. Since He laid in Bethlehem's manger the cradle has become the dearest piece of furniture in the house. He it is who has blessed and honored, and who constantly protects child life. Before He came, sickly children were destroyed. It is due to the teaching of Christ that untold value in life has been preserved. Unlikely children, who would have been destroyed, had He not spoken His gracious words of love and blessing upon the head of childhood, have been nursed, and have developed into splendid usefulness.

In Sparta, and in some of the other Greek cities, in Rome, and among many savage tribes, it was the custom to destroy small and unhealthy children as soon as they were born. Christianity put an end to all that. Byron was born with a clubfoot; Spinoza was weak; Samuel Johnson was disfigured; Sir Isaac Newton was so small that he could have been put into a quart measure; Goethe and Victor Hugo were so weak that they were not expected to live; Charles Sumner weighed but three pounds and a half; Descartes, Gibbon, Kepler, Lord Nelson, Christopher Wren, James Watt, John Howard, Washington Irving, Wilberforce, were characterized by bodily weakness in infancy. Christianity saved them from the fate that would have been theirs if they had been born in the cities I have named, before the Christian era.

Here are women, joyous, clear faced, beautiful, protected, loved and honored. Womanhood owes an incalculable debt to Christ. Before He came she was the slave, the plaything, the toy of evil men. Now she is the companion of her husband, ruling with him in the home, bowing with him in prayer, sitting with him at the Communion table as an equal, in many respects his superior, his guide, his partner. No woman walks the streets in safety today; no woman rides in security in a Pullman car at night; no woman goes anywhere in safety save as Christ has traveled that way before her. Womanhood owes to Him so great a debt, that a Christless woman is the most unlovely thing in the world.

Chapter III

"THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT"

(From the Painting by Plockhorst)

Text: *"He took the young child and his mother by night and departed into Egypt."—Matthew 2:14.*

There is a deception which blinds the eyes of mortals as to the importance and significance of the commonplace. According to a Norse legend, when Thor went to visit Utgard, the land of the giants, he was requested to take part in the games. A great horn was handed him and he was told it was a common thing for a strong man to drain it at one draught. He drank fiercely and long, but made scarcely any impression. They said to him contemptuously, "You are a weak child." "Here, lift this cat." He tried by throwing his whole strength into it, but could only succeed in bending upward the creature's back. "You are no man," the onlookers scoffed. "Here, wrestle with this old woman." Heartily ashamed, Thor seized the old hag and struggled in vain to throw her off her feet. He labored desperately but could not even move her from her position. Utterly humiliated, he turned to leave. Jotun, the chief, escorting him a little way from the place, said to him, "You are beaten then; but do not be too greatly ashamed for there was illusion in the games. The horn you tried to drain was the sea, and you made it recede further than any other has ever done. The cat you tried to lift was the great world serpent. You disturbed him

more than any other. The old woman with whom you wrestled is Time; with her, who can contend?" It is a vivid way of saying that there is a deception which blinds man's eyes to the real meaning of the commonplace. One has to get away from the scene, as Thor did, before he can see the true meaning of events.

At the time of the Crimean War, the names of Generals Raglan and Todelben were household words. Now, I dare say, there are none who read this book who will, at first glance, be able to tell who they were. Few during the time of that war, however, knew the name of Florence Nightingale, but now her name is known throughout the world. We have gotten far enough away from that time to see events and personalities in their true meaning.

In this picture, Plockhorst took the commonplace, set it forth with proper evaluation and made it a thing of vivid truth and surpassing beauty.

There is a legendary Life of Christ which gives strange and fanciful accounts of this occurrence in His babyhood. I quote from one of these imaginative accounts called "Evangelium Infantiae": "Now it came to pass on the third day from their departure, as they went along, that the blessed Mary was fatigued by the excessive heat of the sun in the desert; and seeing a palm tree, she said to Joseph, 'Let me rest a little under the shade of this tree.' Joseph therefore made haste, and led her to the palm, and made her come down from her beast. And as the blessed Mary was sitting there, she looked up to the foliage of the palm, and saw it full of fruit, and said to Joseph, 'I wish it were possible to get some of the fruit of this palm.' And Joseph said to her, 'I wonder that thou sayest this, when

thou seest how high the palm tree is; and thou thinkest to eat of its fruit. I think more of the scarcity of water, because the skins are now empty, and we have none wherewith to refresh ourselves and our cattle.' Then the child Jesus, with a joyful countenance, reposing in the bosom of His mother, said to the palm, 'O tree, bend thy branches, and refresh My mother with thy fruit.' And immediately at these words, the palm bent its top down to the very foot of the blessed Mary; and they gathered from it fruit, with which they were all refreshed. And after they had gathered all its fruit, it remained bent down, waiting the order to rise from Him who commanded it to stoop. Then Jesus said to it, 'Raise thyself, O palm tree, and be strong, and be the companion of My trees which are in the the paradise of My Father; and open from thy roots a spring of water which hath been hidden in the earth, and let the waters flow, so that we may be satisfied from thee.' And it rose up immediately, and at its root there began to come forth a spring of water, exceedingly clear and cool and sparkling. And when they saw the spring of water, they rejoiced with great joy, and were satisfied, themselves and all their cattle and their beasts. Wherefore they gave thanks to God."

Another equally fantastic story is found in a legend reported by Migne (Book II, column 385). It was first printed about the 15th century: 'And on the way they found a labourer who was sowing wheat. Then the child Jesus put His hand into the sack, and threw a handful of wheat upon the road. Immediately, the wheat became so large and ripe that one would think it had been there a year. And when the soldiers of Herod, who sought the child to slay Him, came to that labourer who was then

reaping his wheat, they asked him whether he had seen a woman pass who was carrying a child. 'Yes,' said he, 'when I was sowing this wheat.' Then the murderers thought that he did not know what he was doing; for it must have been a year since that wheat was sown. So they turned back. And having come to a certain cave, and wishing to rest in it, Mary dismounted from her beast, and sat down with the child Jesus in her bosom. And, lo, suddenly there came forth from the cave many dragons. And when the children who were with them saw them, they cried out in great terror. Then Jesus went down from the bosom of His mother, and stood on His feet before the dragons; and they adored Jesus, and thereafter retired. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by David the prophet, saying, 'Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, ye dragons and all deeps.' And the young child Jesus, walking before them, commanded them to hurt no man. But Mary and Joseph were very much afraid lest perchance the Child should be hurt by the dragons. And Jesus said to them, 'Fear not, nor consider me to be a little child, for I am, and always have been perfect; and all the wild beasts of the forest must needs be tame before me.' "

Avoiding the great extremes of these absurd apocryphal stories, Plockhorst sets down in beautiful, simple way the inspiration of this episode in the life of Christ.

The Artist.

Bernard Plockhorst was born March 2, 1825, at Brunswick, Germany. He studied in Munich and Paris. He settled in Leipsic where he worked for ten or twelve years, but later moved to Berlin where he spent the latter part of his life. He is the artist of many famous religious pictures. "Mary and

John Returning from Christ's Tomb," "Christ and the Adulteress," "Contest of the Archangel Michael and Satan," "The Exposure of Moses," "The Finding of Moses," "The Resurrection," "Christ's Farewell to His Mother," "Christ's Walk to Emmaus," "Christ's Appearance to Mary Magdalene" are numbered among some of his most widely known and most masterful works. He was a man of devout personal life. He had had in his early boyhood an intense religious experience and dedicated his life to the proclamation of the Gospel in art.

His portrayal of the person of Christ ranks next to that of Hofmann in technique. Like Munkacsy, he deals liberally in light and shade. Like Hofmann he rejoices in abundance of color. This picture is in the Gallery of Berlin and is valued at $200,000.

The Technique of the Picture.

Plockhorst spent a considerable length of time in the Holy Land studying scenes related to the life of Christ in order that he might more accurately portray them on his canvas. Nowhere was he more successful in this than in the general technique and background of this picture. It is truly oriental. The landscape is a faithful reproduction of an ordinary Palestinian roadside scene. The blazing heat suggested by the glare on the barren hills in the background; a hot, dusty and stony road passing through narrow defiles with only scant shade, the scrubby underbrush in the foreground, all of these are typical of a Palestinian countryside. The animal, upon which Mary and the child ride, is the typical eastern donkey or mule, not at all to be confused with the lifeless and spiritless mountain burro with which it is sometimes associated in Western thought, but a strong and graceful beast, prized and ridden by men and women of good class in the Orient.

White asses were a special mark of rank and dignity. Plockhorst in this picture has made the ass almost entirely white. Deborah addresses the Judges as, "Ye that ride on white asses." They are also sold for high prices in Damascus. Asses were especially used by women (Ex. 4:20; Judges 1:14; I Saml. 25:20). Abigail rode on an ass to meet David. Achsah, the daughter of Caleb, rode an ass to meet her father. Persons of quality and wealth ordinarily used them, (Abraham, Gen. 22:3; Balaam, the thirty sons of Jair, Judges 10:4).

The goatskin hanging from the saddle of the ass is truly oriental, being such as was, and still is, customarily used for the transportation of milk and water.

What Is in the Picture?

I

HERE IS FIDELITY

Plockhorst himself declared that he felt Joseph had been too greatly slighted in the general portrayal of the life of the Holy Family and that he wanted to restore Joseph, at least in part, to the honor which he felt was his due. Here is fidelity in this picture plainly seen in the attitude and face of Joseph. The Scriptures speak of him as "a just man." Is it not true that we have not sufficiently thought of the faith, the rugged devotion, and the courageous constancy of this good man in his most trying ordeal? The infant Saviour owed a great debt to the strong arm and the true heart of this man, his foster father. Godlike, our heavenly Father ventured his whole kingdom on the pure

heart of a good woman and the faith and love of a good man. Had we been doing it, we would have wanted to safeguard our venture with armies and navies and such like futile paraphernalia. God trusted it all to a little baby, sent into the world, and the honor of a man and the purity of a woman. Is it not in a large measure true today that His kingdom is still depending for its advance upon these same qualities? Wherever the Gospel of Christ goes effectively and victoriously, it is carried forward on the hearts and shoulders of good and true men and women who are ready and willing to sacrifice for the sake of love. At the outset, therefore, we point out the strong fidelity in the face and bearing of Joseph the Just, as Plockhorst presents him, plodding laboriously along beside the ass upon which ride his wife and the child, Christ.

II

HERE IS HEAVENLY LEADERSHIP

Notice the little angelic form which is guiding the animal. At the very inception of God's plan of redemption, Satan did all in his power to bring it to ruin, but in vain. Heavenly leadership was sent to guide Joseph and Mary over a place of danger and to guide them into a place of safety. It is this truth which Plockhorst desires to express here. "God is our guide." Many of our hymns make declaration of our faith in this truth. "Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me," "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah," these and many others are illustrative of the faith of men and women of the past in the leadership and guidance of our heavenly Father.

"Hold Thou my hand; so weak I am, and helpless,
I dare not take one step without Thy aid;
Hold Thou my hand; for then, O loving Saviour,
No dread of ill shall make my soul afraid.

Hold Thou my hand; and closer, closer draw me
To Thy dear self—my hope, my joy, my all;
Hold Thou my hand, lest haply I should wander,
And missing Thee, my trembling feet should fall.

Hold Thou my hand; the way is dark before me
Without the sunlight of Thy face divine;
But when by faith I catch its radiant glory
What heights of joy, what rapturous songs are mine!

Hold Thou my hand, that when I reach the margin
Of that lone river Thou didst cross for me,
A heav'nly light may flash along its waters,
And every wave like crystal bright shall be."

He guides us and will guide us.

III

HERE IS PROVIDENCE

Joseph Edgar Chamberlain has written an illuminating book entitled, "The Ifs of History." He points out that if Themistocles had not beaten Aristides in an Athenean election, the world would have been Zoroastrian instead of Christian; that if King Ethelred had not married the Norman woman, Emma, William the Conqueror probably would not have remade England; that if Columbus had not been turned south by a flock of birds, he would have landed at South Carolina, and the United States would have been Latin and not English; and Catholic and not Protestant. This is simply to say that God's Providence is over all and through all. There are no chances; it is all God's plans.

The word "Providence" comes from two words, "pro," which means "before," and "video," "to see"; God seeing before, God arranging. Nothing takes Him by surprise. Seemingly little things are important. We know not what shall prosper, this or that. Our duty is to do that which is at hand, doing with reverence and care all that comes to our hand, knowing that out of the small and commonplace God is able to bring to pass great things.

On a cold winter morning, February 12, 1809, an overcast raw day, one Kentuckian said to another, "Any news?" and the reply was, "No, nothing much; a new baby boy is born at old Tom Lincoln's!" Nothing could be more commonplace, but that baby boy, in the providence of God, was to be the liberator of a race and the political saviour of a nation!

A park; two men walking through it; a lad of eight or ten years looking on curiously. One of the men lays his hand upon the boy's head, smiles at him, and tells him he believes God will make a great preacher out of him, and in later years Chapman declares it was the hand of Sankey that first started him toward the ministry! A commonplace thing, yet in God's providence how powerful!

A shoe store, a clerk, an ordinary Sunday School teacher stops in on the way home and says to the clerk, "I want you to be a Christian and give your heart to Jesus." Years later the shoe clerk is shaking two continents for Christ. Moody declared it was the earnest invitation of his Sunday School teacher that started him. A commonplace thing, and yet in the providence of God, how important!

In this picture, an ordinary Palestinian mule, a bright day, a dusty road, a man and woman and their Child on a journey. How commonplace, how ordinary, and yet here God is saving His Son for

the redemption of the world. O, that our eyes were opened to see the true significance of that which seems ordinary and meaningless!

IV

HERE IS GUARDIANCE

Plockhorst intends to portray that by the protecting figures at the top of the picture. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation." This beautiful verse of Scripture was no doubt in the mind of the artist as he endeavored to portray this profound and comforting truth that we are defended and protected every step of the way. A thousand unknown and unexpected dangers lie in the path. Could we but see the unthought-of perils which beset our way every day, we would shudder. We are defended from them constantly by the guardian power of our Christ and His angels.

One recalls the beautiful story of a little sailor lad who, having arrived at port, set out, with his wages in a bag, for home. At the wharf he inquired the best way home. He was told that the shortest way was through a wood-path, though a safer way lay around by the road. With a laugh he chose the dangerous path and started blithely on his way. But a brutal sailor had heard the conversation, and hastened ahead to lie in wait for the lad. He cut himself a cudgel, and hid by the roadside. Presently he heard the little midshipman coming, whistling as he swung along. When he was almost within striking distance, an owl suddenly hooted, and the boy dashed off the path and into the woods—and safety! But the sailor was not to be cheated. Once more he hurried ahead, The scene was re-enacted.

But when the lad approached this time, he heard a great rush of stones and gravel as some little animal started them rolling down the hillside. Again he was off to see what had happened.

But the sailor was persistent. He hid once more. This time, however, the lad crossed the foot-path and made his way through the wood to the road. The sailor hurried ahead, and hid by the roadside. The midshipman was almost at his hiding place, the hands of the sailor lifted to strike, when both heard the sound of wheels and stood still while an old farmer drove toward them. The sailor drew back, unnoticed. The lad hailed the farmer and asked a lift home, which the farmer gladly gave. When the first glad greetings were over, the boy's mother asked him: "Did you have any adventures coming through the woods?" "Oh, no!" he replied, "I heard an owl hoot, and saw a squirrel or two, and getting tired I crossed over to the road and then Farmer Brown came along and gave me a lift. That was all." That was all! If he had only known! And if we knew, how often would we be down on our knees saying, "Father, I thank Thee!" For the Great Father watches over his children.

"I say to thee, do thou repeat
To the first man thou mayest meet
In lane, highway or crowded street,
That he and we and all men move
Under a canopy of love
Broad as the blue skies above."

There are only two possible objections to this teaching; one is on the ground that God has not the power to care for us, the other that He does not care to do so. God has the power. All power is His. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore." The unmistaken implication here is that those who are Christ's and engage

in His work are protected by all the power that is His. Certainly He cares enough to exercise this power. "He careth for you" and Christ's own words, "Fear not, little flock," emphasize the truth of His guardian love.

Let us rest refreshed and encouraged by these silently eloquent truths portrayed by the great preacher, Plockhorst, in this masterful painting.

Here is fidelity, heavenly leadership, providence and guardiance. God help us to rely upon them.

CHAPTER IV

"THE GOOD SHEPHERD"

(From the Painting by Plockhorst)

SCRIPTURE LESSON: *Isaiah 40:10, 11.*
Job 30:1.
John 10:1-18.

The Artist.

The reader is referred to the sermon on "The Flight Into Egypt" for the description of the life and work of Plockhorst, the artist of this picture.

Shepherds in the East.

In order to understand this picture, one must know something, at least, about the shepherds of the Far East and their customs. In this western country it is extremely difficult for us to enter fully into an appreciation of the life and work of the shepherd. The sheep raising industry is not the most prominent one in our life, and even in those parts of the country where it does occupy the attention of a large part of the people, it is done on so large a scale, and in such an entirely different way from that followed in the East as to offer practically no parallel.

The Bible is an Oriental book and in no respect is its Oriental nature more manifest than in its constantly recurring reference to the shepherd and his sheep. Some of the most beautiful and tender passages are those that describe the relationship of Christ and His people in terms of shepherd and sheep. The Eastern shepherd sustains, toward his

flock, the most tender feeling. They know his voice and will withdraw from a great flock at his call. It is one of the most interesting spectacles to see a number of flocks of thirsty sheep brought by their several shepherds to be watered at a fountain. Each flock, in obedience to the call of its own shepherd, lies down, awaiting its turn. The shepherd of one flock calls his sheep in squads, draws water for them, pours it into the troughs, and, when the squad has done, orders it away by sounds which the sheep perfectly understand, and calls up another squad. When the whole of one flock is watered, its shepherd signals to it, and the sheep rise, and move leisurely away, while another flock comes in a similar manner to the troughs, and so on, until all the flocks are watered. The sheep never make any mistake as to who whistles to them or calls them. "They know not the voice of strangers." (John 10: 5.) Sometimes they are called by names (v. 3). It was such a scene that greeted Jacob's eyes when he fell in love with Rachel at first sight. (Genesis 29: 10, 11.) Moses met his wife and her sisters at the watering troughs. (Exodus 2: 16-21.)

In the evening, in Palestine, the shepherds may be seen coming from various directions leading their flocks to the common corral. There they are cared for, several flocks being mingled together. In the morning each shepherd calls his own sheep, and without the slightest confusion they withdraw from the main body and follow him. The twenty-third Psalm is a beautiful and accurate description of the custom of the shepherd as the sheep are folded for the night. The Eastern shepherd occupied a unique position toward his flock, and a friendship sprang up between him and the dumb creatures in his care. There is no counterpart in our life to

this relationship which he sustained to them. In the early morning he would lead his flock from the fold to the pasture lands. All day he must closely watch lest harm should come to them from prowling beasts of prey or robbers. At certain seasons of the year he must lead them still further afield, far from the haunts of men, where he must live among them, scorched by the heat, at noon, and drenched by the dews at night. He must be prepared to lay down his life for them. "The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling." Should one of the lambs be unable to keep pace with the rest of the flock, he must carry it in his bosom. Should one of the flock go astray, he must search for it until he finds it, tracking it by the tufts of wool left in the briars and thorns. The sheep are never left to themselves. The shepherd is always in evidence. The country is unfenced, and crossed with delusive paths, frequented by wild beasts and rolling off into the desert. On the same moor, across which at night the hyenas howl, you meet the shepherd, sleepless, farsighted, weatherbeaten, armed, leaning on his staff and looking out over his scattered sheep, everyone of them on his heart. Then you understand why the shepherd of Judea sprang to the front in his people's history. You know then why they give his name to their king and made him the symbol of providence. You understand why Christ took him as the type of self-sacrifice.

Every shepherd wore a simlah. It consisted of a piece of cloth about seven feet from right to left, and four and one-half feet from top to bottom. A width of one and one-half feet was folded in at each side, and sewn along the top, with a slit at each top-corner through which the hand and wrist could pass. The artist has represented one thrown about

the shoulders of the Saviour. The charge of flocks has always been one of the chief vocations in the East, and the shepherds of Palestine today lead the same nomadic life as when Jacob's sons wandered with their flocks from Hebron as far north as Shechem and Dothan. (Genesis 37: 17.) For there are no pastures in Palestine, as we understand the term, but simply lonely, unfenced, uncultivated hills and plains where no dwelling is to be seen save the low black tents of the Bedouin Arabs, and the presence of wild beasts, the lot of the shepherd is no light one. Wild animals constitute an ever-present danger.

The principal weapon of the shepherd is the club or "nabutteh," a heavy oak bludgeon about two feet long, having a head into which nails are driven to give weight and severity to a blow, and a handle with a cord or strap to assist the grasp. This cudgel hangs from the shepherd's girdle as he walks along, while he carries in his right hand his "assayeh," or staff, often with a crook at one end, which he uses on behalf of the sheep, either to administer chastisement, direct the way, or rescue them from danger. Then at night he sleeps with his staff thrust down his back under his cotton shirt, and his club, now free from his girdle, in his right hand, the cord twisted around his wrist, ready to do battle with robber or wild beast, and, if necessary, perhaps to "lay down his life for his sheep." (John 10: 11, 15, 17.)

The sling, with which David was familiar, and in the use of which the men of Benjamin were so skillful (Judg. 20: 16), was made of goat-hair. The pad for the stone was of a rounded, diamond shape with a small slit in the middle, so that when a stone was pressed into it, it closed round like a bag. It

received its name in Hebrew, as in Arabic, from the slightly concave form in which it was woven. This is "the hollow of a sling." (I Samuel 25: 29 R. V.) In the two strings, strands of white and black hair were artistically woven, one of them at least having an opening at the end for the fingers. Besides being used against robbers, the sling does the work of the Western sheep-dog, for with it the shepherd can drop a stone near a sheep lagging behind, and startle it into a sense of loneliness and danger. At the present day, when a quarrel arises between the youth of neighboring villages, a sortie of lads is sometimes made from each, and sling practice is indulged in, usually at long range. (Cf. II Kings, 3: 25; II Chronicles 26: 14.) An Arab proverb describes the habitual tale-bearer as one who puts a secret in a sling, that is, he tries how far he can throw it. This is the thought of Prov. 26: 8 (Machie).

By day and night the shepherd is always with his sheep, and one of the most familiar sights in the East is to see the shepherd leading his flock either to the pasture or to the fold. He generally has a dog or two with him, large, fierce animals that can offer battle to a wolf and by night give warning of the approach of thieves, so that it is not safe to go too near the flock unless on friendly terms with the shepherd. The shepherd depends upon the sheep to follow him, and they, in turn, seem to look upon him as their natural protector. He gives two cries as a rule, one that is represented by the sound "Taa-ho," and the other a sibilant or hissing noise referred to in Is. 5: 26, 7: 18, Zech. 10: 8. Yet if a stranger attempts to imitate the shepherd, the sheep will at once assume a startled air and will "flee from him." (John 10: 5.) And the picture

of the good shepherd is still true today (Isaiah 40: 11): "He shall feed his flock . . . . he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." And the same solicitous care is shown lest the flocks be overdriven, as was exhibited by Jacob in Genesis 33: 13.

When night approaches the shepherd leads his flock to some safe fold, perhaps a cave in the hillside, or perhaps a rude enclosure within four stone walls, reinforced with thorns and brambles, such shelters serving for a considerable district, so that when nightfall approaches the shepherds may be seen converging from all quarters toward the fold, each followed by his charge in two separate parallel columns: the sheep ring-streaked, speckled, and white, in one, the black goats in another.

The fold has no door, the one opening being a narrow entrance in the wall. Here, when guarding the sheep at night, or admitting or giving them egress by day, the shepherd takes his place, and, quite blocking up the entrance with his bulky form, is himself virtually the door. (John 10: 9.) As each animal passes through on entering the fold, the shepherd may dip a round bowl into a vessel of water and offer the cup "running over" to a thirsty sheep to drink, and at the same time if the animal has injured any part of its body, an accident most likely to occur to its head, he anoints it with the healing olive oil, which is the universal balm of the East. (Psalms 23: 5.)

There is another very interesting allusion to shepherd life in Ezek. 20: 37, to which the Rev. James Neil draws particular attention in his "Everyday Life in the Holy Land," namely, "I will cause you to pass under the rod." This passage, he points

out, receives some light from Leviticus 27: 32: "And all the tithe of the herd or the flock, whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord." It was the way of taking the tithe of sheep or cattle. As Jewish writers have recorded, it was usual when the tenth was being taken, to bring all the animals together and place them in a fold. They were then allowed to pass out one by one through the narrow entrance where the shepherd stood with his club, the rounded head of which was dipped in a bowl of coloring matter. As the beasts came out—thus themselves arranging the tithe with perfect impartiality—he let the rounded head of the club fall on every tenth, marking it with a spot of colour: and those thus branded were taken for the purpose of slaughter as sacrifices. Here we have in Ezekiel the gathering together of Israel out of the countries where they are now scattered, and at the same time the purging out from among them of the rebels, both strikingly set forth by this illustration.

The ownership of large flocks necessitates the employment of hirelings, and because "he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep," the ancient law required that he should give proof of the loss of an animal attacked by some wild beast by carrying home some part of the torn sheep for examination (Exodus 22: 13, Amos 3: 12). Wages to such hirelings are paid in kind, one lamb in every ten born in the flock being given to them, and in this way they gradually accumulate flocks of their own as Jacob did. (Genesis 30: 28-35.)

What Is in the Picture?

Here is

I

PROTECTION

The shepherd goes constantly before his sheep. They are never driven. They are always led. This is in striking contrast to the custom of the herdsman in our Western lands. The Eastern shepherd lands are infested with poisonous serpents. It is the shepherd's duty to keep watchful eye on the path along which he leads, in order that he may kill any such. These serpents often bite the sheep as they graze. Plockhorst is telling us in this picture that the Good Shepherd precedes his flock, and that nothing in all the experience of life can come to us, save as it has first gotten by Him. This conviction should make us courageous, and in it we should find comfort. Let us accept, then, the experiences of life as coming to us with His permission and for our own good.

Here is

II

GUIDANCE

He goes before not only to protect but also to lead the way. Keeping close to Him we cannot miss the way. One recalls with much joy the hymn so often sung:

"There is a guide who never falters,
And where he leads I cannot stray,
For step by step he goes before me,
He marks the path, He knows the way.

"He knows the way that leads to glory,
Mine every fear he will allay,
And bring me safe at last to heaven,
Let Jesus lead, He knows the way."

This was the thought that Dr. J. H. Gilmore had when he wrote the beautiful words to the hymn

"He Leadeth Me." Gilmore had led the Midweek service at the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia in 1862. He had spoken on the twenty-third Psalm. At the close of the service he returned to Deacon Watson's home and there, with his mind still filled with the course of his thought, he wrote down rapidly the words that have since been sung around the world:

"He leadeth me! O blessed thought!
O words with heavenly comfort fraught!
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

"Sometimes 'mid scenes of deepest gloom,
Sometimes where Eden's bowers bloom,
By waters still, o'er troubled sea,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

There is no way too rough; there is no country too stony and barren for us to travel, if we only are convinced of His leadership, and see Him going before us. We will follow on and not be afraid.

Here is

III

COMPANIONSHIP

The shepherd is alone save for his flock in the solitary regions of the East. The flock likewise has no companion save him. The companionship is intensified by the loneliness of the life in these regions of Palestine. Some of the sheep follow near and some wander far off. It is those nearby who have most joy and peace. These it is whom the shepherd knows best. They receive from his hand the choice delicacies. In turn they cheer and warm his heart. Those who lag and who wander far out are those who run into danger. Out there the peril is greatest and the strength is least. It was when Peter was

"following afar off" that he got into difficulty. The only safe place is near Christ. One would like to burn this message into the hearts of all Christian people. Our churches have many of those who are on the fringe. They desire, to be sure, to be counted Christians. In time of necessity they call upon the minister and the church. They come occasionally to the service, and even know by heart a few of the hymns, that is, the most simple ones! But they are loosely attached. They are far-off followers. They lag. They stray. They are easily discouraged. They quickly grow indifferent. They wander into strange places. They do not keep close to the Shepherd. They drift into bypaths, and get caught in hedges and thickets. They pass most of their time in the places where danger is greatest and where inspiration and strength are least. They are the foolish sheep. The companionship of The Shepherd, His presence, His tender personal care, are among the richest blessings the Christian has.

Peter followed afar off. He then warmed himself at the fire of the enemy. He then sat down with them. He finally betrayed the Lord. The sequence of events is striking and significant. It all began by following afar off.

Here is

IV

SUSTENANCE

The very life of the sheep is in the care of the shepherd. Their feeding depends upon him. His wisdom and skill find for them the choicest pasture and the refeshing streams. A sheep is at best a very silly animal. One wonders if the Lord used the expression of sheep with the Christians in mind! Quickly alarmed, easily discouraged, continually

wandering, they constantly need the shepherd's watchful eye, strong hand and loving heart. His wisdom and love are the safeguard of their very lives. This was what Christ meant when He said, "My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." He is indeed the Good Shepherd who giveth life to His sheep. The word translated "good" is not to be understood in any sentimental poetic way. In the Greek it means much more than that. It means the *only good*—the true, the perfect Shepherd. The Greek word is often rendered "lovely" or "perfect" or "fair." "I am the Good Shepherd" Christ said, meaning that "in Me and in Me alone is what men need for life." It was as though He had said, "I am the only Good Shepherd." Here is an indirect, but a bold and unmistakable assertion of His Deity. In the Old Testament, God is spoken of as the Shepherd of Israel again and again. Here Christ boldly appropriates and applies to Himself this title of divine honor. The book of John is full of symbolic expressions. Christ declares, "I am the Door"; "I am the Vine"; "I am the True Bread." All of these figures of speech He uses in an effort to convey to our sluggish hearts the fullness of His tender and constant love.

Sometimes the good Shepherd must sling a stone or bruise a wandering sheep. It is always for the good of the sheep. Sometimes He takes the little lambs in His tender arms and when that happens we are drawn the nearer to Him. This is beautifully illustrated in the picture at this moment under our thought. The Shepherd bears in His strong arm the little lamb, while the mother sheep presses close against Him, looking up with anxious solicitude and

love. This is a beautiful thing to Christ, our Shepherd. He desires that we walk closely with Him and ofttimes a little life is taken to Him in order that our own lives may be drawn more closely to Him.

Chapter V

"CHRIST WALKING ON THE WATER"

(From the Painting by Plockhorst)

Scripture Lesson: *Matthew 14:22-33.*

One cannot read this Scripture lesson without being impressed with the distinctive thought of the separate verses.

Verse twenty-two describes in a vivid way the thoughtfulness of Christ for the physical needs and necessities of His disciples. The five thousand men and women had just been fed. Flushed and tired with the excitement and strain of it all, He finds that He Himself is in need of rest, and anticipates their similar necessity. Retiring to a secluded place (verse twenty-three), He engages in prayer while His disciples set off to a place of quiet. Again and again we find Christ withdrawing to be alone in prayer. He needed the strength that came from such exercise. Who can describe the sweetness of secluded prayer?

"I love to steal awhile away
From every cumbering care
And spend the hours of setting day
In humble grateful prayer."

Here, under the silent Syrian stars, the Saviour poured out His soul in refreshing and strengthening prayer. The people had wanted to make Him king. He had come to be a Saviour. We have here the constant contrast between the world's thought and

Christ's. The world is always looking for splendor and for pomp; it wants a king; He insists on being a Saviour.

Verse twenty-four describes one of those sudden storms to which the Sea of Galilee is subject. The word is very strong in the Greek. It is "tortured" by the waves; literally, writhing in agony. The Galilean Sea lies in a deep hollow which extends southward by the still deeper trench of the Jordan and the Dead Sea. Taken altogether it is the most remarkable depression on the earth's surface filled with water. It lies 682 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. The heated air from this low-lying body of water rises. The cold air from the Mediterranean sweeps down the funnel-like ravines of the coast with great velocity, causing storms that are not only sudden, but extremely dangerous. It was just such a storm that overtook the disciples. They had set out in the early evening and had worked desperately at the oars all night, for we are told that it was "in the fourth watch of the night" (verse twenty-five), that Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. The Saviour had prayed alone all night and dawn was breaking when He arose from His knees and looked down upon the lake and descried the boat more than half way across the lake, battling with wind and wave. The lake was about forty furlongs wide, and John 6:19 tells us that the disciples had gone twenty-five or thirty furlongs. The fourth watch of the night was between three and six o'clock in the morning according to the Greek and Roman method of reckoning. The night was divided into four watches (Mark 13:35) called "even," "midnight," "cock-crowing," and "morning." And now, worn out and desperate

in their alarm, the disciples are ready to give up hope.

When the disciples saw Him coming, they were troubled, saying, "It is a spirit." This has reference to a common Jewish superstition. When a Jew met a friend by night, he would not greet him lest it should be a demon in his friend's shape. This old superstition kept the disciples from calling out to Him, but it could not stifle their cry of alarm which Jesus overheard and to which He replied, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." Then the impetuous Peter—how one loves him!—called out, seeking permission to advance to the Saviour. The permission being given, he sets out; is saved from destruction by the hand of Christ; and with the Saviour returns to the boat where he joins with his companions in worshipping the Master. It is extremely significant that Jesus does not forbid this worship!

Altogether, this is one of the most amazing and vivid stories in the Scripture. It has been ridiculed by unbelievers through all ages. Strauss speaks of it as grotesque. In the latter part of the second century, Lucian pelted it with his pitiless artillery of keen, biting satire. The atheism of the eighteenth century sought to explain it away. It suggested that under the stress of the storm the boat was kept close to land and that when the disciples saw Jesus, He was in reality not walking on the water but merely walking along the shore "above" the sea, or "toward" the sea. Other skeptics have called it a myth and claim to have discovered prototypes of it in the Old Testament where it is said, "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters." The sheer fact of the matter is, however, that this is one of the most stupendous of Christ's

miracles because it involved a supremacy over the mighty, mysterious and universal power of gravitation, the force which holds in its grasp the planets and suns and all that is upon them.

It was a prophetic miracle. The mind of the Saviour was occupied with anticipation of the future. He had come from a long night of prayer. He was thinking of the sufferings that should befall Him and the glory that should follow these. It was His purpose to lead the thoughts of the twelve thereto and to prepare them for what would soon come to pass. The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand had been a picture of the Last Supper —a prophecy of His death. This miracle was a prophecy of His resurrection, a demonstration of His power over the most relentless and universal forces of earth. He assumes here the resurrection body and lays claim, momentarily, to those forces, the habitual use of which He had declined during the greater part of His earthly life.

What Is in the Picture?

Here is

I

DEITY

There are always those ready to say, "But what about the laws of nature? Is this thing not contrary to or a violation of nature's laws?" The objection is familiar. It is unscientifically dogmatic. It is conclusive evidence of both mental and spiritual nakedness. As a matter of fact, not one of our philosophers or scientists knows enough about nature to say what is contrary to her laws and what is not. The wisest and most profound men, as far as their knowledge of nature is concerned, are like children picking up pebbles on the shore of the

infinite sea of knowledge. In the second place, the laws of nature are simply the ways in which God has been observed to work habitually. If God is personality, it is absurd to think that He could not, upon occasion, change His habit. We reserve the right to do that in our daily lives. How much more has God the right and power so to do. And then, again, throughout all of His life, Christ gave evidence of lordship over cosmic forces. So great was His power that the question, "Who then is this, that he commandeth even the wind and the water and they obey him?" became familiar on the lips of His followers. It is the question of all who come into close and intimate contact with Him. And there is only one answer, namely, Here is Deity! Here is, also,

II

FAITH

Courageous, reverent, imperfect, but honored, faith. How one's heart goes out to Peter, the audacious, the impetuous, the wave-man, the rock-man. How he embodies in his personality the feelings and experiences through which everyone of us has passed, in some degree at least! One recalls Dr. Wells' suggestive lines:

"Now he walked on the angry wave,
Now he sank in the watery grave;
Now he rose in triumphant faith,
Now he fell toward threatening death,
Peter, the wave man.

"Now he firmly stood for the Lord,
Based his life on the living Word,
Saw in Jesus the Godhead shine,
Dared to call Him the Christ divine,
Peter, the rock man.

"Now he rebukes Christ in his pride,
Now he has even his Lord denied;
Now he uses a silly sword,
Now he shrinks at a maiden's word,
Peter, the wave man.

"Now he weeps in his agony,
Now he listens: 'Lovest thou me?'
Now and for aye, as at Pentecost,
He stands for the Saviour that once he lost,
Peter, the rock man.

"Rough old fisherman brotherly dear,
Near to my weakness, very near,
Far from your folly I would flee,
Brave with your boldness I would be
Peter, a rock man!"

How many of us would have dared to set out as Peter did? His faith was victorious until he began to concentrate upon the dangers that surrounded him. So long as he kept his eyes upon Christ, he was successful. Transferring his attention to the perils that surrounded him, he began to sink.

Dr. McAfee has told us of a minister who sat in his study, tired, annoyed, discouraged. "His messages had been poorly received; his people seemed unappreciative; sin was gaining on his church. He sat in his familiar study with his face buried in his hands. Over the desk hung Hofmann's picture of 'Christ Among the Doctors,' an inspiration generally, now forgotten. His little boy came to the door, wanting to see him. The minister turned irritably and told the child to go away. As the little fellow started to go, he said with tearful voice, 'Good by, papa'; then, seeing the picture over the desk with its strong young face speaking comfort and strength, he added, 'Good by, Jesus.' And the father suddenly saw why he had been so discouraged. He had been separated from Jesus. He had left Him

out. He had looked at wave and water, at storm and tide, at the countless troubles all around him and had left Christ out."

Here is

III
LOVE

The infant Church was in that boat. Christ would not see these men perish. He has, through all the years, been with the Church and His love will protect and lead her through all the years to come. No rational mind can doubt the presence and purpose of God in the affairs of this world, after a thoughtful study of the history of the Church. Nor can a thoughtful individual question the over-lordship of Christ in His Church after a study of her history. Someone has sarcastically said that the Church must have been a divine institution else its friends would have killed it long ago. Laying aside all sarcasm, it is a profound truth that Christ will not suffer His Church to be ultimately destroyed. It is His Bride. Through it He will bring to pass His purpose in the world. His love and power are such as to graciously overrule the mistakes of His devoted followers in the Church and to bring to pass His own glory and ultimate supremacy.

Plockhorst has given us here a beautiful and vivid picture of the love of Christ that reaches out a rescuing and sustaining hand to the Church in every time of peril. There is, most emphatically, no attempt here to identify the Church with Peter or to suggest that he in any way occupied a place of superior authority in the Church. The author hopes that this will be very clear. There is here, however, a very clear teaching of the truth that Dr. Isaac Watts, in the year 1719, so beautifully set in poetic form:

"God is the Refuge of His saints,
When storms of sharp distress invade;
Ere we can offer our complaints,
Behold Him present with His aid.

"Loud may the troubled ocean roar;
In sacred peace our souls abide,
While every nation, every shore,
Trembles and dreads the swelling tide.

"Zion enjoys her Monarch's love,
Secure against a threatening hour;
Nor can her firm foundations move,
Built on His truth, and armed with power."

Is it not true, my friends, that it is only through the effort and power of Christ that the Church has been preserved and led? When she has kept close to her Saviour, she has prospered. When she has turned her eyes away from Him, she has floundered and been in imminent danger of destruction. The days of greatest spiritual prosperity in the Church have not been coincident with the days of greatest material prosperity. It is not by might, nor by power, nor by gold, but by the presence and influence of the Lord Jesus Christ that the Church advances.

Here is

IV

SALVATION

It is said that nowhere in all art is there a firmer, more striking clasp of two hands than that which Plockhorst has given us here. See the firm, strong way in which the hand of Christ grips the wrist and forearm of Peter, while the fingers of Peter are firmly clasped upon His hand and wrist! *This is the grip that does not slip.* Peter might have been lost there within hand's reach of Christ. Peter was very near Him, and still he was sinking. There are many near Him, but yet are lost. We must

lay hold upon Him. The glorious fact is that men are laying hold upon Him. It is a refreshing thing to read Begbie's "Other Sheep," but one must remind one's self as that book is read, that the sins of respectability are even more subtle and dangerous than the sins of the flesh. We may be morally clean, and yet the sins of pride, of greed, of selfishness and self-righteousness may rankle in our hearts. Dante puts sinners of this kind farthest from God. The fact that a man is moral and respectable will not save his soul. "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6). There are many things that may bring us to Christ, even as near as Peter was to Him, and yet, being near, we may sink. It is possible that natural temperament may bring us near. Many of us are by nature of a more or less strict moral life. "But if you are boasting of a morality attained away from Christ, let me ask you this question: Whose is the standard of morality? Possibly you may fail before my standard. If I were attempting to be saved in my own strength, I might fail before yours. There is only one standard of righteousness, and that is God's and no man can ever know God nor can he enter into the kingdom of God, until he reaches that standard.

"It is an absolutely hopeless task in your own strength. A man might as well try to lift himself by his own boot-straps as in his own strength to attain to the standard of righteousness of an infinite God. But when by faith you accept Jesus Christ; when you turn away from sin and unto Him; when you say, "From this day on, I shall walk with Him"; when your life is yielded to Him, so that He lives in you, and works through you—then God looks at you no longer in your individual capacity, but He looks at you in Christ.

'So near, so very near to God
Nearer I could not be,
For in the person of His Son,
I am as near as He.'

My friend, if you are walking on the sea of life alone; if you are trusting in your own strength for victory and peace, I beseech you to turn your eyes to and put your faith in Christ before you are engulfed in the waves of sin."

My message is also to those who have found forgiveness and light in Christ. Let us reach out our hands to wrestlers with the troubled sea, that our grip may bring them to Him, whose grip completes and supplants our own. Let us pray for those who are without a knowledge of this wonderful Saviour. Dr. Chapman says, "One of the most terrific storms that ever swept over on the Northern Sea was raging. The fisher folk had gathered upon the shore, and were down upon their knees in prayer, the minister in the center of them. They were lifting up to God the boys who had fastened themselves to the rigging of the vessel out in the storm. The vessel was plunging down into the trough of the waves, and then mounting to the crest of them. The master of the vessel put his speaking trumpet to his lips and shouted, 'Boys, if we go down again it is the end. Make ready.' And they went down again, and once more they came up. Then the master put the speaking trumpet to his lips again, and shouted, 'Lads, there is someone praying for us on the shore tonight. We will weather the storm,' and they did."

One of my friends, the minister of a great church in Chicago, said to me the other day, "After all, it is the strong, warm grip of a man that counts!" As Christ has gripped us in salvation, so let us lay hold on others and bring them to Him that He also may grip their souls.

Chapter VI

"CHRIST AND THE FISHERMEN"

(From the Painting by Zimmerman)

Scripture Lesson: *Matthew 4:18-22.*

The Artist.

Zimmerman, the artist of this picture was a Swiss. He was born in Munich, 1855. His father was a painter and his boyhood was spent in careful study in his father's and other studios. The supervision and the encouragement his father gave him were of untold value and inspiration to him in his later life. He has painted comparatively few Bible pictures, most of his work being landscape and historical portrait. This is by many considered his best picture. In it he has combined the two occurrences spoken of in the Scripture lesson.

The Technique of the Picture.

Zimmerman delighted in somber colors. He was a master of delicate and accurate detail. Authorities consider that nowhere in art are there more beautiful hands than those of Christ in this picture. It is striking to notice the contrast between the hands of Christ and those of the peasants, which are equally well formed but of entirely different character.

What Is in the Picture?

Here is

I

PERSONAL ATTRACTIVENESS

We read the Scriptures in a very blind way. Here are men leaving their nets—their living—and following Christ! What was the spell which He threw over them? How appealing must have been the force of His personality! How glibly many of us have aforetime read this Scripture account! We have taken it as a matter of course that Peter and Andrew and John should leave their living. We have failed to notice that it was "as he passed by," that He called them. What man today has sufficient vigor of personality to call men *as he passes by,* from their accustomed employment to an entirely new venture of faith? These men were of the same clay as we. They were men who depended upon their fishing for their livelihood. They were men of family and responsibilities. It was not a light and flippant thing which they were undertaking.

The force of the personal presence of Christ must have been tremendous. We make a mistake to think of Him in terms of anaemia, flabby forearms and paleness. We think of Him possibly too much in terms of "sorrow and acquainted with grief, despised and rejected of men." It is perfectly true that He was, but we fail to see His irresistible vibrant personality. It is only strong men, magnetic men, who inspire others with great enthusiasm and who build great organizations. He called Matthew as He passed by! He drove the money changers out of the temple by the forcefulness of His personality. There is nothing in the Scripture to indicate that He struck one of them. He so impressed the thief on the cross that that individual spoke of His King-

dom. Zimmerman has made the Christ attractive. Here is

II

INTENSE PERSONAL DEVOTION

Already it is shining in the faces of Peter, Andrew and John. This personal devotion to Jesus is the heart of Christianity. It is the only thing that can hold one to the long road of a Christian life. It is the essence of the Christian faith.

Someone has declared that Christianity is a transaction between two personalities, that of the believer and that of Jesus Christ. Certain it is that He is the very heart and center and source of our faith, and that love for Him, reliance upon Him, service in His name, and faith in Him are the essence of the Christian faith.

One cannot escape the question, "Why should there be such a personal devotion to Him on the part of these men?" Quickly the answer springs to mind. It was because Christ had confidence in them. He encouraged and brought to light in these men qualities which even they themselves did not suspect. In the mercurial Peter He confidently looked for stability. In the covetous and crafty Zaccheus He looked for generosity. In the lost Magdalene He looked for beautiful purity. In Matthew, the renegade Jew, He looked for the author of a book that will live forever. So great was His confidence in these men and in all with whom He dealt! And the striking thing about it is that Christ was not disappointed. These qualities, because He had faith in these men and expected to find these qualities, suddenly developed or came out of their long obscurity into splendid prominence. It is always those who trust us who educate us. It is those who have confidence in us who draw out of us our very best.

This was Dr. Arnold's experience at Rugby. When he went to that school he found placards of warning and prohibition all over the school. He at once ordered them taken down and said to the boys, "I trust you to be gentlemen. This is a school for gentlemen. I am quite sure everyone here is a gentleman!" Suddenly they began to feel like gentlemen. He said to the boys, "We do not require any proof of your honesty. Of course, I take your word; I believe what you say to me." Before long the boys were dealing most severely with any chap whom they discovered had deceived Dr. Rugby. "Why," said they, "he trusts a fellow." Jesus Christ trusted these men, and because He trusted them, the finest part of their spirits came into evidence.

This is just the thing Mrs. Rice has taught in her book, "Lovely Mary," where Mary says to Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch, "I can never forget you all. I was awfully mean when I came to the Cabbage Patch, but somehow you all just loved me into being better. I wasn't used to being bragged on, and it made me want to be good more than anything in the world." Wherever Jesus found the slightest tendency to good He encouraged it with glad enthusiasm. He rained upon it with the shower of His praise; He shone upon it with the light of His warm love, and these men's hearts went out to Him in intense personal devotion because He believed in them and made them believe in themselves.

Here is also

III

THE POWER OF IDEAS EMBODIED IN PERSONALITY

See how His hands are on Peter. Here is the personal contact that is so vital to the propagation of

the truth. The fact is that ideas themselves are not of great force in the world. Ideas have to become clothed upon with human flesh before they make much of an impression. This is one of the profound truths of the Old Testament. Beautiful and moving as it is, it was not until the old truth of its teaching was personalized in the Saviour that it really accomplished its purpose.

George Eliot puts this truth beautifully in one of her books where she says, "Ideas are poor ghosts. They pass athwart us in their vapor and our sun-filled eyes do not discern them. But sometimes ideas become clothed upon with flesh. They look at us with warm appealing eyes. They speak to us in tender tones. They lay soft compulsive hands upon us. Then their presence shakes us like a passion and we are drawn to them as a moth is drawn to the flame." Is not this a vivid description of the Incarnation? After all, it is personality that touches our life at a greater number of points and at more vital points than any other force in all the universe.

In Christ the love of God was incarnated. In Him the truth, purity and righteousness of God drew near to men in the flesh. He was the embodiment and personification of the highest ideas of God, cherished by the cleanest souls and clearest minds among the great seers of the past. And the transcendent purity and radiant wonder of His life far exceeded even their highest expectations. In Christ God came in human form to deal directly with humanity—to look at them with warm appealing eyes and to lay soft, compulsive hands upon them.

The touch of His personality upon ours won us. It is by the touch of personality with personality that the Kingdom is extended. A speech may be misunderstood, a sermon may fail to convince, but

no one can answer a life or fail to understand it. Where Christianity triumphs, it does so through the personal embodiment of its ideals; not by the statement of them, but by the living of them.

Here is

IV

DIRECT COMMUNION WITH CHRIST

There are no intermediaries necessary. The touch is personal, close, tender and immediate. Peter, Andrew and John looked directly into His eyes. The expressions on the faces of His three disciples are wonderful. The grizzled face of Peter is suffused with tender love and eager attention. The disciples speak directly to Him. This is the heritage of Protestanism. It is the thing for which we long fought and is a privilege dearly bought. There is no necessity of praying through the Virgin. There is no involved preparation necessary for those who would come into His presence. To be sure, we should not rush thereinto heedlessly. Because the veil is rent, we are not privileged to put our feet on the mercy seat! But the veil is rent, and we may come quietly and directly and we may come as these men came, with their nets and their soiled garments and their horny hands.

Here is

V

APATHY

While these three men, Peter, Andrew and John, are conversing with Him with the most intense eagerness, Zebedee, the father, is engaged in the dull business of unloading the boat. It is a masterful stroke on the part of the artist and typifies the strange indifference of some folk to the really vital things that go on about them.

I have a friend who recently made a trip through the Berkshire Hills in the northeastern part of our country. While others were engaged in joyous exclaim over the beauties of the scenery through which they were passing, she was entirely absorbed in search for a cheap spoon which had been misplaced in the baggage. It is extremely difficult to have patience with people of this kind.

Here is Zebedee with the chance of a lifetime before him. He might join the group in their converse with the Saviour. He might receive inspiration of eternal importance to his soul. He has a chance now to walk into the presence of the Son of God and to talk with Him face to face. He, like Peter, might have felt the touch of His hands, or, like John, might have drawn up so close to Him as to see into the very depths of His eyes. But he is engaged in carrying a spar out of the rowboat. My friend found the spoon as the journey was drawing to its close, and I suppose Zebedee got the spar to land, but what an opportunity lost! And still, my friends, many of us are guilty of an equally amazing failure to sense and grasp opportunities. How many of us allow trifling things of daily life to interfere with surpassing spiritual privilege. God help us to have a proper sense of subordination that we may give due attention to that which is eternally important!

Chapter VII

"THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

(From the Painting by Holman Hunt)

Text: *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock."—Rev. 3:20.*
Scripture Lesson: *Rev. 3:14-20.*

The artist of this famous picture was an Englishman. Holman Hunt was born at London, in 1827, where he grew up, intended by his father for commercial life. In his seventeenth year, however, he gave up business and devoted himself to the study of art, being admitted in 1844 as a probationer to the class of the Royal Academy. He devoted himself principally to religious subjects and his paintings of scenes from the life of Christ have made him famous and have been eloquent exponents of Christianity. His works are all full of religious emotion. He himself was a devout Christian and an indefatigable worker. In Palestine he studied oriental landscapes and figures to make more realistic his paintings from the life of Christ. His picture, "Finding of Christ in the Temple," brought $30,000 and "The Shadow of Death" brought $50,000. He was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral in 1910 with national honors.

This picture, "The Light of the World," is his most widely known production. The original now hangs in Keble College, Oxford. It is valued at $100,000. Bishop W. Walsham How, author of the well-known hymn, "O, Jesus, Thou Art Stand-

ing Outside the Fast Closed Door," based his hymn upon Hunt's picture, which had just recently been completed and was winning the admiration of the world.

The Technique of the Picture.

Hunt was devoted to realism and this picture vividly illustrates his tendency in that direction. He was a master of detail. The undergrowth of weeds and clinging vines before the door, the intricate embroidery worked on the robe which covers the shoulders of Christ; the facets in the jewels that stud the lantern which the Saviour holds in His left hand, the fruit on the ground, all of these details declare that Hunt is a master of technique.

What Is in the Picture?

I

HERE IS CHRIST, THE PROPHET

One recalls the Shorter Catechism, "What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer?" and the answer, "Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation." Holman Hunt meant by the white robe upon the figure of the Saviour to declare the prophetic office of Christ. He was saying to us that Christ executeth the office of a prophet in revealing to us by His word and spirit the will of God for our salvation."

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."—John 1: 18.

"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."—John 15: 15.

"But these things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name."—John 20: 31.

II

HERE IS CHRIST, THE PRIEST

"Christ executeth the office of a priest in His once offering up of Himself, a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, to reconcile us to God; and in making continual intercession for us."

"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer."—Heb. 8: 1-3.

"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for sweetsmelling savour."—Eph. 5: 2.

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."—Heb. 9: 12.

"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."—Heb. 10: 14.

The palms of Christ are turned outward and the wounds are visible within. The marks of the thorns are evident on His brow, while only the edge of His white robe conceals the wounds in the feet. The robe thrown over His shoulders and held in the front with a clasp across the breast is symbolic of the priesthood of Christ. This is a robe similar to that worn by the ancient high priest. The jeweled clasp on the breast of the Saviour contains the twelve stones habitually worn by the high priest. Incidentally, the golden braid on this robe

in its intricate and delicately beautiful pattern, together with the jeweled cord about the wrist of Christ and by which He holds the lantern, illustrate the tremendous ability of the artist in detailed technique.

III

HERE IS CHRIST, THE KING

Hunt is declaring to us in this picture his faith in the Scripture which is condensed and formulated in the Shorter Catechism declaration, "Christ executeth the office of King in subduing us to Himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all His and our enemies."

"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Ps. 2: 6.

"He shall judge the people with righteousness, and the poor with judgment."—Ps. 72: 2.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."—John 10: 27-28.

He has placed upon the head of the Saviour a crown of gold and has interwoven in it the wreath of thorns. This is symbolic at once of the Saviour's estate of exaltation, the heavenly king typified by the gold, and also the estate of humiliation or the sorrowful king typified by the thorns.

IV

HERE IS A TWO-FOLD LIGHT

(a) *Here is the Light of Conscience.* Hunt symbolizes this by the lantern which the Lord holds in his left hand. Jesus brings the light of conscience with him. Apart from Christ a conscience is dark and dead. It is always those who are nearest to Him who have the most delicate

and correct conscience. A man declares, "My conscience doesn't bother me." The question at once is, "Ought it not to bother him?" I have a friend who had trouble with one of his eyes. He visited an oculist who turned into the eye a very strong stream of light. My friend cried aloud and seized the arm of the chair in which he was sitting: "Thank God," the oculist exclaimed, "I was afraid the nerve was dead!" A conscience that does not bother one is nothing of which to be proud; rather it should cause the deepest concern. Stagnation is the last stop before damnation. With the coming of Christ, the conscience awakens and troubles one.

Notice the revelation made by the light of conscience. This is one of the most fascinating truths Holman Hunt has given us in this great picture. The light of conscience in the hand of Christ reveals:

(1) Wilfulness.

This is typified by the fruit on the ground. The wilfulness and stubbornness of the human heart—who can describe it? We are all familiar with it. Sin has been defined as self-assertion in disregard of God. This is exactly the sin which caused the fall of our first parents. The forbidden fruit—asserting one's self and following one's own inclination in disregard of, or in direct opposition to the will of God. It is when the light of conscience glows in the heart that this is made clear. Conscience reveals also:

(2) Neglect.

What a vivid and realistic touch this is! See the weeds, the tangled shrubbery, the overgrown and neglected door-step. Some of the vines have grown across the crack where the door opens,

even fastened themselves to the hinges. They are tangled and matted. Hunt is describing to us in an eloquent way a desperate state of the human heart when neglect has been allowed to come into the life. The light of conscience reveals also:

(3) Resistance.

This is typified by the door shut and barred. Shortly after Hunt had completed this picture, a friend was examining it in his studio and called his attention to what he termed a remarkable oversight. Said the friend, "You have curiously forgotten to place any latch on the door!" Hunt instantly replied, "What you think is forgetfulness is rather the most studied kind of deliberation. The latch is on the inside. The door can be opened only from within." What a preacher Hunt was! What a marvelous evangelistic message this is, done in oil! It is perfectly possible for one to say, "He may be a prophet, He may be a priest, He may be a king, but He will be neither my prophet nor priest nor king; I will have none of Him." The human heart is the only thing in God's universe that can persistently and ultimately set itself against the beseeching love of God. This is its unique and fatal power. In that tender description of the Seeking Shepherd, the story that fell from the lips of Christ and that through all the ages has melted hearts, there is one black forbidding verse, namely, "If so be that he find Him!" Is it possible that the infinite Shepherd can go searching for His sheep and fail to find him? It is possible. Therein lies the possibility of tragedy. Christ cannot force; He can only invite. The light of conscience reveals also:

(4) Evil deeds and thoughts.

These are symbolized by the skillful painter in the bat in the upper left foreground of the picture.

This bat, awakened from its rest by the approach of the Saviour, flutters up, startled by the light and, aroused by the knock of Christ's hand upon the door, flies away. So do angry passions, dark deeds and evil thoughts stand revealed in the light of conscience and attempt to make their escape from the presence of the Son of God.

The second part of the two-fold light in the picture is:

(b) *Here is the Light of Salvation.* This light is on His face. It is the mystic radiance that all feel when they approach the presence of Christ. Every great artist who has dealt with Christ has endeavored, with only partial success, to express the mystic light of salvation which glowed from the face and presence of the Saviour. It was the strange and subtle thing which overpowered His would-be captors on that tragic night in Gethsemane. When, standing before them, He declared that He was the one they sought, they retreated before Him and fell prone upon the ground.

The first perplexity of the infant Church was as to His humanity. The first heresy of the Church was the denial of the humanity of Christ. Those who lived and associated daily with Him, who were closest to Him, could not understand how He could be human. This is a most extraordinary reversal of the common experience of men. Ordinarily those who are farthest removed from us are most ready to ascribe unusual power to us. Those who company with us daily in intimate association know full well our faults and failures and are least ready to ascribe to us unusual powers. But the purity of the life of Christ and the whole influence

of His personality was such as to make them wonder how He could be human.

He comes with the light of salvation today. His purpose is to make men holy, which is a word meaning Wholesome. He knocks at every heart. How great is that mistake which feels that only those who are dissolute and abandoned are in need of salvation. As a matter of fact, the sins of respectability are most difficult to reach. These were the sins about which the Saviour, when He was here upon earth, showed the greatest concern. He was not, of course, complacent about any sin, but it was the arrogance, the haughtiness, the deceit, the self-righteousness, the play-acting, the hypocrisy, the pretense of the respectable and honored leaders of the State and Church which called forth from the lips of Christ the most withering scorn and the sharpest words of condemnation. "The harlots shall go into the kingdom of heaven before you," He declared to the Scribes and Pharisees.

A great preacher of Chicago, with a passion for reform and civic advance in his heart, made an investigation of some of the most distressing conditions in the slums of the city, and then went into his fashionable pulpit and declared to his people with tears streaming down his face that he had discovered that much of the evil in the city was carried on with the knowledge and acquiescence of men who sat in the front seats of some of our great churches.

The Saviour comes with the light of conscience and salvation and His coming is of importance to both the high and the low.

V

HERE IS MAN'S AWFUL POWER

He can hold Omnipotence at bay. He can frustrate the seeking heart of the Eternal. He cannot quench but he can baffle the love of God. He can take himself off, in spite of God's love, to eternal destruction and loss. We can shut Him out. We can refuse liberty and take license. We can refuse freedom and take bondage. We can refuse truth and take falsehood. We can refuse life and take death. We can refuse hope and take despair. We can refuse heaven and take hell. All of this we do if we leave the door shut against Him.

"'Good-bye,' I said to my conscience,
'Good-bye for aye and aye.'
And I pushed her hands off harshly,
And turned my face away,
And conscience, smitten sorely,
Returned not from that day.
But the time came when my spirit
Grew weary of its pace,
And I said, 'Come back,' to my conscience,
'For I long to see thy face.'
But conscience cried, 'I cannot,
Remorse sits in my place.'"

If we let Him in, however, we may have liberty and freedom and truth, life, hope, heaven, and in addition to that, we may have the best things of this world; for while the present market value of righteousness is not the greatest value in connection therewith, there is such a value which we do well to recognize. The best things of this world go to the righteous. The righteous man is the truly happy man. "The way of the transgressor is hard" not only hereafter but also here. Opening the door to Him, we have the best of this life and all of the joy of heaven.

A young man sat in the author's study recently and spoke of the death of his mother and of his hope of meeting her in heaven. We should preach more about heaven; we should think more about it. "There remaineth a rest for the people of God." Only Christ coming into our heart can fit us for heaven and can finally bring us thereto. The name of Jesus and His presence in the heart unlocks heaven for us.

When our Civil War was on in the United States, a young fellow, passing over the battlefield, saw a friend of his lying there who was shot almost to pieces. He stooped down and straightened out the shattered limbs, took water from his canteen to wash away the blood from his face, and then said, "Is there anything more I can do for you?" "Yes, there is something you can do for me," replied the dying lad. "If you have a piece of paper in your pocket, and will write a letter to my father, I think I can sign it. My father is a great judge in the North, and if you take him this letter, he will help you." And this was the letter: "Dear Father: I am dying on the battlefield, and one of my friends is helping me, and if he ever comes to you, be kind to him, for Charlie's sake." And then, with fingers that were fast stiffening in death, he signed his name.

The Civil War came to its end, and the soldiers went back home. One of them, in tattered uniform, made his way to the home of this great judge, but the servants would not admit him, for he looked like a tramp. He waited until the judge came out, and then stepped in front of him, holding out this soiled piece of paper. But the judge, thinking it was a plea for assistance, pushed him to one side. Then the soldier stepped back again, and showed

him his boy's signature, and that made all the difference in the world. He threw his arms around the soldier, and took him back into his house, and said to him, with tears running down his cheeks, "You can have everything that my money can buy, everything that my influence will secure." The name did it! And there is a Name that unlocks heaven; it is this:

"Sweetest name on mortal tongue,
Sweetest carol ever sung:
Jesus, Blessed Jesus."

Our future welfare, our hope, life, destiny, depend upon what we do with the waiting Saviour. Barring Him out, we will go down to death. Letting Him in, we may have life, for it is in and through Him that the Father accepts us and redeems us. "All our righteousness is as filthy rags." But for Charlie's sake the judge took in the soldier, and for Jesus' sake God saves us. But only—if we let Him in!

Chapter VIII

"THE ANGELUS"

(From the Painting by Millet)

Text: *John 5:17.*

"The Angelus" is one of the world's most famous paintings. Like most great things, it is extremely simple. Its simplicity, however, is profound and the moral lessons it teaches are many and vital.

The Artist.

Jean Francois Millet was born October 4, 1814, at Normandy, France. He was the eldest son of a Norman peasant. His father was a very devout man, an ardent member of the Catholic church. Jean, as a boy, drew pictures on the farm. His talent was so evident that his father sent him to Paris in 1837 where he studied art and where, in 1841, he was married. He immediately returned to Normandy where he painted his first great picture, "The Winnower." "The Angelus" was painted in 1859. Millet was a nature artist. He deals almost entirely with representative subjects of the common everyday home life of the French peasants. Said he, "If I could do what I like, I would paint nothing that was not the result of impressions received directly from nature, whether in landscape or in figure." He was a master of human figures. He later came to combine landscape with human life and make it all one harmonious story, interdependent and in perfect unity. He was a master of

chiaroscuro. He had made so profound a study of light at the different hours of the day that he became known as a master in the production of scenes of that nature. For instance, his "Filling Water Bottles" portrays the mist of the morning; his "Gleaners" depicts the full glare of noonday, while his "Woman Sewing" shows the lamplight, and his "Angelus" is a picture of twilight. His human figures are primarily expressive; they are only incidentally beautiful. This quality is illustrated in the picture under discussion and even more so in his picture, "The Man with the Hoe." This picture reveals the quality of circumambient light which sets the picture out, making the figures lifelike.

Millet was a master of space composition. Notice the tremendous distance suggested in the picture, both back and up. Bernard Brenson declares that this characteristic of Millet's work communicates intense religious emotion.

The pose of his figures is splendid. It was his custom to mold many of his figures in wax or clay before painting them. Repose, in Millet's work, is represented only by moments of suspended action, as in this picture. One of Millet's friends, looking at the picture shortly after its completion, expressed great admiration and said that he could hear the sound of bells floating through the dim half-twilight. Millet's face beamed as he said, "That is just what I wanted to make heard!" A number of Millet's pictures are efforts to reproduce sound as well as beauty. His "Meadowlark" which shows the young peasant girl in tiptoe of excitement listening to the musical note of the bird as it rises straight up into Heaven is so vividly done that the beholder fairly hears the note of the bird in imagination.

This attitude of reverence taken by the peasants in the picture, Millet had seen many times on the part of his mother and father. At the sound of the vesper bells heads are uncovered and bowed and lips murmur, "Angelus Domini, nuntiavit Mariae; Ave Maria, gratia plena."

The young man has a thick shock of curly auburn hair and holds his felt hat in his hands. His wife in white cap and blue apron stands while the sunset glow lights up her pink sleeve and folded hands. The rooks fly homeward through the evening sky. The little Church of Chailly rises against the sky. It is seen dimly surrounded by a grove of trees.

Even the agnostic, Gambetta, acknowledged the power of this picture and paid tribute to it.

Here is

I

TWILIGHT

This is the end of the day. A record has been written. There is something solemnly final about the close of the day. Every day is a day of judgment. "The moving finger writes, and, having written, moves on. Nor all our piety nor tears can call it back to cancel half a line." Here is the close of day, whose hours have been filled with honest labor. We wonder what the record in the heart has been. Our prayers should be that God would keep us each day, not for yesterday or the morrow, but for one day at a time.

Here is

II

GOD'S COUNTRY

I am thinking of a friend who told me he was anxious to get away from New York with its crowds, with its selfishness, with its cruelty, with its sinful-

ness. Most of us are familiar with the saying, "God made the country; the devil made the city." That is only partly true. The fact is that in the city the worst evil is to be found, but also much of the greatest good is to be found. City life is such that practically everything is intensified, both good and evil; the greatest wealth, the greatest poverty; the greatest evil, the greatest righteousness. Good people and bad people are here, both raised to the Nth power. But, after that has been said, it yet remains that there is an inspiration about God's out-of-doors, a something that invigorates and re-creates,—something that soothes and sustains, that is not found in the city. Here is God's country, the open field, the bare soil with its health-giving, nerve quieting properties. Much of the nerve strain of the present time is due to a lack of man's actual contact with the soil and God's open country. We recall the fable we learned in school of the giant whose strength was constantly replenished by contact with the earth, and, removed from such contact, he became hopelessly impotent. There is truth in it for human life. The thrill of the mountains of Colorado, the charm of the open prairies, the fragrance of the fields of alfalfa and corn, refresh the soul. It was in the open desert country of Arabia that Paul found himself and gathered poise and courage for the great work ahead of him.

Here is

III

WORK

Let us be perfectly clear in understanding that work itself is not a curse. It is a mistaken interpretation of the sin in the Garden of Eden to make it appear that work was the curse pronounced upon

Adam and Eve. Work itself is one of God's greatest blessings. The conditions under which we must work, the thorns that infest the ground, the misunderstandings, the bickerings, the building up of some splendid enterprise, to see it topple like a house of cards because of deceit and dishonesty—these things constitute the curse! "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." These are the words of Christ. There is no place in the universe for laziness. He requires work. He thinks so highly of effort that He has decreed that no character can be grown, no mind developed, no progress made in time or eternity without work. Jesus was a carpenter who toiled at the bench. At the very last, He took a towel, the symbol of service! God is everlastingly working on and on. We no longer think of the universe as a colossal engine which was once started out on the highways of space and later abandoned by the Engineer, while the engine rushes wildly on to the roundhouse of nowhere. No! The Engineer is aboard His engine; He is within the fire and the steam and the wheels; His hand is on the throttle, His eye is on the rail, His mind is aware of the terminal. "Look where you choose, and there is a tremendously industrious God at work. In cell, atom, seed, and star; in sod, worm, plant, and sky; in weed, water, wind and wold; in fin, claw, feather, and wings; in protozoa, metazoa, vertebrate and mammal; in organism, metabolism, variation and species; from protoplasm to pleiad, from scum to sun, from dirt to duty—in all, through all, and over all the Eternal Biologist, the Divine Chemist, the Celestial Weaver, the Infinite Artist is aeonianly at work." There is no room in the universe for a lazy God, and He Himself has so decreed it. The Christian God thinks so highly of honest, educa-

tional, character-unfolding effort that He never does for man what man can do for himself. An idle, untoiling human is the sheer negation of soul. "Because, if God could not be God without working always and throughout all realms, how can man ever become the being God intends, if he does not release his hidden, pent-up powers through worthy toil, and in the very process realize whiteness and grandeur of soul." God is working harder than any one of us. Work is God's greatest gift to men. But under some conditions, work may become soul-deadening instead of soul-developing.

"The Board of Aldermen in a certain town voted to increase the wages of milk inspectors. 'What about the milk testers?' spoke up one alderman. 'They're trained men, chemists, and they're worth more than inspectors.' An effective answer was quickly forthcoming—'No! We don't have to pay them more. They won't quit. They like their work too much.' Most discussions of the labor situation ignore the fact that contented men work not only for the wage, but also for the work. Ask the average man in the average plant: 'Do you like your job?' Most will answer non-committally. Ask those who said 'Yes' their reasons. Almost always it will be that the hours are good or the pay is good. The man is most unusual who says, 'I like the work.' The primary interest of the average man has changed, under modern industrial conditions, from his work, to his time and money. His grandfather's day consisted of finishing the chair and beginning the table. His day consists of what lies between an 8 o'clock and a 5 o'clock whistle. Grandfather's work was a part of living. Now it is apart from living. His grandfather did good work because the work was a part of him, and a job well done gave him a position

in his world peculiar to himself. If the grandson does good work it is to keep from being discharged and to continue getting his pay. There are, it is true, certain situations, even today, in which the worker is not a 'hand,' but a personality. But these situations merely illuminate the difficulties of the others. The locomotive engineer, for example, takes great pride in his job. He drives his engine and is not driven by it. On him rests the responsibility for the safety of a train, and keeping to the schedule. He exercises judgment, and is a person of importance. Most workers, however, do not guide machines; they follow them. When a traveling belt carries parts to the assemblers, it forces these men to perform their operations at once. The use of the worker's intelligence is sharply circumscribed. The constant effort is to perfect machines so as to eliminate human judgment. The *ideal* machine is one which calls only for periodic oiling, starting and stopping. The 'Instinct of mastery'—as deeply seated and fundamental as almost any other in human nature—is denied expression. As a result, most human beings spend from eight to ten hours every working day of their lives doing what they do not enjoy. This is one of the fundamental reasons for the prevailing 'unrest.' Another phase of this need left unsatisfied by work as it is carried on at present, is the need for appreciation—the desire of every human being to be respected and well thought of. The furniture maker 75 years ago was a person of relative importance in his community. Today all that is known of him is that he works in a furniture factory—one of the 'hands.' He turns out so many chair legs. His foreman may appreciate him, and perhaps his wife, but very few people else. His work allows no recognition of his per-

sonality—he is one of a large number of cogs. He has not even a complete rounded-out product for himself to take pride in.

Picture the executive with his busy, hard-working day, full of responsibility, variety and interest. Imagine him chained to a task which is simply a series of repetitive movements, hour after hour and day after day. Perhaps he did rise from the ranks, but 99 out of 100 do not rise, and the problem remains for them. Their desire for enjoyable work is just as great as his. That is why they loaf, and drift from job to job, and strike for shorter hours —so as to get more time to do the things they like. Attempts to remedy the problem have generally taken the form of welfare work, such as ball teams, social organizations, the building up of 'company spirit' or bonuses. Plainly, few who are weary of their jobs will stay because of a ball team, a picnic or 'company spirit' built up by a company publication. The effect of bonuses, however, is great. But it has been found that after a time men become accustomed to their bonus, and that the stimulus of higher pay wears off. They grow to feel that the extra money is not a reward for increased effort but their rightful due for normal effort. During the recent period of highest wages and most numerous bonuses, per capita production was proportionately lowest. In a general way, work which is 'enjoyable' places responsibility on the shoulders of the person doing it and gives him a sense of his own usefulness or importance; also, enjoyable work has sufficient variety to keep it from growing monotonous. What classes of people find their work enjoyable? The greater proportion are, of course, the professionals, executives from heads of organizations down to 'straw bosses,' and artisans: Sales-

men are an outstanding example of a class whose work has sufficient variety to keep it from growing monotonous. The solution of the problem is of course much more difficult than the mere recognition of its existence. To go back to the days of the artisan is neither possible nor on the whole desirable. The question is entirely one of modifying present-day manufacturing processes and organization. "(a) Workers should be placed in a position commensurate with their mental ability. (b) As much responsibility as the worker can successfully bear, should be part of the job. (c) Wherever possible, the product of each man's work should be an entity in itself that will give the man a genuine feeling of having accomplished something when he has finished. (d) Where it is possible to include the factor of responsibility in the work, and where the work must necessarily be divided, for the sake of production, it may be varied from period to period."

Here is

IV

LOVE

Here is love that shares common sorrow, common toil. Our American women would not wish today, possibly, the work this woman is doing, and yet there is a joy that came to that good Missouri farmer and his wife who, having lost their little son, found comfort in being in the fields together. Not from necessity, but from choice, she assisted him in such part of the outdoor work as she could do in order that they might be together under God's open sky, in the fields where love is simple and hearts are true.

Here is

V

WORSHIP

Notice the bowed head and the silent prayer. Husband and wife, though lovers, are each responsible for his own soul, and both heads are bowed. They worship together. It is the twilight hour, and one can almost hear the tones of the Angelus as they come floating across the fields from the tower of the church seen in the far distance. Here is true love and true marriage. Together they enter into the holy place. I would like to write this word upon the heart of every husband and wife.

There are men who are tender toward their wives. They provide every needful thing for their comfort. They are thoughtful and big-hearted. They council with them and are kind toward them. But when it comes to the matter of personal religion, they draw back and will not go with them. They shut themselves out of the deepest and most sacred part of their wife's life. Alone she goes to the church. Alone she sits at the Lord's Supper. Alone she falls to her knees in prayer. Alone she bears the hopes, the trials, the aspirations of her soul. He has no part with her in all of this. I would that I could say to all America, such a marriage is no true marriage!

If they are not one at the very core and center of life — in the heart — in the soul — in prayer — in heaven—in eternity—in God—then they are not one in the full way God intended. That is why there is no true marriage save a Christian marriage. Such action on the part of a husband is utterly wrong and reprehensible, and God will bring him into judgment to answer for it. It is a great wrong to the Christian wife. Hearts are to be united in eternal fellowship. The years here below are but

times of preparation, while life is knitting to life, soul blending with soul, for a union that will endure beyond the valley of the shadows, and last through all eternity. God help those of us who are husbands, to think upon these things and to do them.

Is there worship in your life? Does the swaying of the deep-voiced bell in the distant tower thrill you or has your heart become so occupied with things of temporal interest as to have become deadened to the thrill that once it felt at the sound of the church bell? Do the hymns no longer awake a responsive chord in your heart and are you without joy in singing? Does the Word of God from the pulpit fall upon an unresponsive spirit? If so, call to God, for you are in need of His re-awakening mercy.

This picture, "The Angelus," depicts for us life. A New York doctor some time ago wrote a book entitled, "What Men Live By." Work, play, love and worship he declares are the four cardinal things out of which life is made, and no one of these elements can be absent if life is to be whole, full-rounded and satisfactory. Indeed, he goes on to say, "The lack of any one element, if it is continuous, will lead to disaster." Here in this picture, Millet has given us Work, Love and Worship,—three of the four prime elements of life.

PART II
CHRIST'S PASSION IN ART

Courtesy Gramstorff Bros., Inc., Malden, Mass.

1. "Christ's Triumphal Entry"; 2. "Christ Before Pilate"; 3. "The Crucifixion"; 4. "The Descent from the Cross"; 5. "He Is Risen."

Chapter IX

"THE TEMPTATION"

(From the Painting by Hofmann)

Scripture Lesson: *Matthew 4:1-11.*

The Artist.

The reader is referred to the sermon on "Christ and the Rich Young Ruler" for a description of the life and work of the artist.

The Picture.

Here is a typical oriental scene—the blazing sky and the parched earth. The heat and the discomfort typify the pressure of temptation, and the depression and anguish of the heart and spirit of the Master. The serpent adds a malignant touch as he circles Satan and turns away from Christ. Jerusalem is seen in the distance, dazzling white and set upon a hill. Stanley, in his monumental work, "Sinai and Palestine," declares that from the east is the only way to see Jerusalem. The artist here has given us the view as one looks from the southeast, across the valley of the Kedron. According to this picture, Christ is evidently standing on what is called, on most modern maps, the Mount of Offense. It will be noticed that the artist has pictured Christ as standing firm. Satan is retreating. Hofmann was a student of his Bible!

What Is in the Picture?

Here is

I

THE PERSONALITY OF SATAN

Hofmann follows the custom of the ancient artists who invariably pictured the temptation with Satan appearing as a visible figure. Modern painters set down this scene without the physical presence of Satan, thus coming more nearly to the actual truth. Satan is a personality. He is, however, not a visible personality. Where he is made to appear visibly, it is simply an effort on the part of the artist to make vivid the truth of his existence and of his power. The wings Hofmann has given to him are expressive of his spiritual power. These wings are very different from those that appear upon angels. Of course, it must be clearly understood that neither Satan nor angels have wings. Wings simply typify spirit. Hofmann is saying to us here that Satan is a personality, just as truly as Christ is a personality. He appears in this picture as a repulsive, unattractive personality. Hatred and anger and evil are visible in his face, and in the entire outline of his figure. He is, moreover, a strong personality. There is strength in every line of his body. He is made unattractive here because he is being seen through the eye of Christ. He often appears to us mortals as an angel of light. Christ, however, is deceived in no such way. The piercing gaze of the Saviour penetrates his disguise, and he stands forth in all his spiritual personality, strong and repulsive and hideous. There are ninety-seven passages in the Scripture where Satan is spoken of as a personal spirit. One of the most ingenious devices he uses is that of persuading men he does not exist. The man or woman who does not believe in a personal devil has not properly resisted him! There is in the universe

a tremendous battle going on. The forces of Satan and the forces of Christ are at death grips. In this picture Hofmann has given us in a vivid way the scene when the generals of the two great opposing forces met.

Here is

II

THE TERRIFIC FORCE OF TEMPTATION

It stands out in the face and attitude both of the Saviour and of Satan. Here is a fight. There can be no mistake in that. The blazing eyes of the Saviour, the tense dramatic attitude of both the figures, mean a contest to the death. We sing,

"Like a mighty army
Moves the church of God,"

and there are those who laugh and ridicule the song, saying that the church is like most anything else but an army. It is true that the church is too often careless and lax and indolent. But, for all that, she is an army that is engaged in a terrific warfare. "There is no discharge in that war," declares the inspired writer, and in this war between Christ and Satan, there is no discharge, no respite, until Christ shall have won the victory. For the victory will be His. Hofmann has indicated that clearly in this present picture. The attitude of Christ is one of absolute authority and of unshaken confidence. Satan is already retiring in rage.

"The fiercest battles that ever were won,
Shall I tell you where and when?
On the maps of the world you will find them not,
They were fought in the hearts of men."

The force of temptation is terrific. Satan works in our hearts both positively and negatively. He sows tares and also takes away the good seed that is sown. Temptation, however, is not an evil. It is no sin to

be tempted. Many earnest hearts are troubled at this point. Christ Himself was tempted. Real nobility of character is impossible if our goodness were not tried. Untrained innocence is sweet, but victorious virtue comes only when temptation is met and resisted. It is struggle that is built into the fiber of manhood and womanhood. When temptation is used as an opportunity for conquest and growth, then we are developing in righteousness, and after the pattern of Christ.

> "And so I live, you see,
> Go through the world, try, prove, reject,
> Prefer, still struggling to effect
> My warfare; happy that I can
> Be crossed and thwarted as man,
> Not left in God's contempt apart,
>
> With ghastly smooth life, dead at heart . . .
> Thank God, no paradise stands barred
> To entry, and I find it hard
> To be a Christian, as I said!"

Browning has declared that when the fight begins within a man, he is worth something. God stooping over his head, Satan looking up from below, both tug, the man in the middle wakes and grows!

Here is

III

STRENGTH FROM GOD

The uplifted finger of the Saviour is eloquent. It indicates both the source of His authority and of His power. He is able to overcome the temptation of the devil because He is in close contact with His Father.

This is the only source of security you and I have in temptation. The soul that habitually lives on the fringe of spiritual things; the men or women who with careless indifference refrain from the comforting and strengthening ministry of the church, at-

tending its services only occasionally; the men and women who allow themselves to become utterly submerged in worldly enterprises to the exclusion of all spiritual interests; those, who, like Peter, follow afar off; all of these are alienating themselves from God, who is our only source of strength in time of temptation. They are weakening themselves for the hour of battle. "With every temptation He doth provide a way of escape," the Scripture tells us. But if we have withdrawn far from Him, we may not be able to see the way of escape, which He has provided. "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee," the Psalmist declares. The best thing; in the best place; for the best purpose, some preacher has outlined his sermon on that text. But if the word is not hid in the heart, there will be no guidance as to the way of escape, which the Lord provides for those who hear and heed him. There is only one source of strength on this earth for poor, weak, sinful mortals—it is the strength that comes from God. The channel from His heart to ours must be kept open, that the sweet silver streams of His grace may flow downward into our lives. We allow the contact to be broken. We allow the channel to become clogged, and our lives are flabby and ineffective as a result.

"Why comes temptation—but for man to meet
And master, and make crouch beneath his foot,
And so be pedestalled in triumph? Pray
'Lead us into no such temptation, Lord'?

Yea, but O Thou Whose servants are the bold,
Lead such temptations by the head and hair,
Reluctant dragons, up to who dares fight,
That so he may do battle and have praise!"

Here is

IV

HEAVENLY SOLICITUDE

The angel, who appears in the upper right hand corner of the picture, is expressive of the solicitude of heaven in these trials that come to men. There were certain tremendous crises in the life of Christ. This was one of them. Another was at Gethsemane. He was the second Adam. He came to redeem men from the curse of sin. The first Adam had failed miserably. He came to retrieve the loss. In this temptation scene all heaven was anxiously concerned. The angels hushed their songs, and crowded to the parapets of the heavenly city. There, with breathless interest, they looked upon the scene being enacted on the earth—the first great crisis of the ministry of the Son of God—the temptation! Would He fail? Was it possible for Him to fail? Christ was tempted in all points like as we are. He was peccable. There must have been present the possibility of sin and failure else this temptation was all mere stage theatricals. Of course, in a certain sense it was *not* possible for Him, being who and what He was to fall into sin, but I do want to insist that in a very real sense it *must* have been possible. Christ had to face and overcome temptation as a part of His true humanity. He did overcome it because of His Deity. But it cost Him a terrific struggle. This temptation was not a farce. It was not stage melodrama. It was a tremendous battle, more fierce than any temptation you or I will ever have. The storm that raged in the heart of Christ at this point was greater than any that has ever raged in human heart. The reason is simply this—*you cannot have an ocean storm in a teacup.* The personality of Christ, as contrasted with ours, is like the

ocean to the teacup. Satan offered Him all the kingdoms of the world. Christ wanted the kingdoms of the world more intensely than the most earnest hearted man who has ever lived. Satan offered Him immediate recognition. Christ wanted recognition more passionately than any preacher who has ever lived. Satan offered Him physical relief by wrong use of his power. Christ was in need of physical relief. Only those who have borne the pangs of hunger and the torments of thirst can begin to appreciate His physical anguish at this terrific experience. The Scripture declares that after His victory over Satan, angels ministered unto Him. The solicitude of heaven extends to us not only during the time of temptation, but following. No soul achieves victory in temptation without experiencing the comforting ministry of the angels of God after the victory has been won.

A very clear word must be said relative to those who deliberately enter into temptation, seeking, as they say, to test themselves. This is wrong. "The man who invites a moral struggle which he could avoid simply for the sake of the moral struggle, is foolishly playing with fire, and he deceives himself in doing it, in supposing that his motive is good, when in fact it is generally a low curiosity or a morbid desire for new sensations." We are to pray, "Deliver us from temptation," but when, in the course of doing our duty, we fall into temptation, then we are to "count it all joy." We are not to be afraid of anything. We are to be confident in God's presence and power and willingness to help us, and to provide a way of escape. This He will always do, if we permit Him to do it.

Here is

V

SATAN'S DEFEAT

Here in the very beginning of His ministry we have a foregleam and prophecy of Christ's ultimate and full triumph over Satan. This is not a battle, the outcome of which is in doubt. The last book of the Bible, which is sometimes called the Revelation of St. John, but which is, in fact, the Revelation of Jesus Christ *through* St. John, describes in glowing terms the victorious Christ, slaying, by the breath of His mouth, this great adversary. Thank God we have met Satan's conqueror. We know death's Master. We have to do with One who is victor over every evil force, and Who by His power and love will bring us safely through the trials of life, to ultimate victory and peace. Satan is mighty, but not Almighty.

Let us pray then, "Deliver us from temptation," for the way to nip sin in the beginning, is to refuse it prominent place in our minds. To be sure we cannot prevent sinful thoughts flitting through the mind. Neither can we prevent the birds flying over our head. But we can prevent them making nests in our hair. When temptation comes, let it be said instantly and resolutely, "There will be no temptation!" The importance of this is realized when we understand that no one ever yet succeeded in overcoming the impulse to express in action that thing which had been granted habitual right, secretly, to occupy his thoughts. The sudden moral collapse that astonishes one's friends, is not sudden. It is the unexpected outward manifestation of that which *for long* has been going on inwardly. Of many a person it might be said, could we see the heart, "There he is at his damnable rehearsals."

Those rehearsals will some time break out of the heart into the open life, and the world will be amazed. "Deliver us from temptation." This should be our prayer, but when temptation comes, let us "count it all joy," for we know Him who can and will deliver us.

Chapter X

"CHRIST'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM"

(From the painting by Plockhorst)

Scripture Lessons: *Matt.* 21: 1-11
Mark 11: 1-11
Luke 19: 29, 44
John 12: 12-19

The Artist.

The reader is referred to the sermon on "The Flight Into Egypt" for a discussion of this artist; his life and work.

There were three roads that might have been followed, from Jericho, through Bethany and across the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. One road skirts the northern shoulder of the Mount of Olives. The second and shorter road runs directly across the brow of the Mount of Olives. The third passes around the southern edge of the Mount. Christ and his disciples took the southern road. It was a weary climb. The Mount of Olives is a half mile due east of Jerusalem, directly opposite the temple area. On the immediate north is Mt. Scopus, where Titus camped in 70 A. D., when his Roman soldiers destroyed the city. Just south of the Mount of Olives is the Mount of Offense. Here Solomon set up the idolatrous images, worshipped by his heathen wives. The Mount of Olives is 2,682 feet high,

being 259 feet higher than Mount Moriah, the site of the temple. It was on Mount Moriah that Abraham's hand was stayed in the act of offering Isaac. The deep and precipitous valley of the Kedron lies between Moriah and Olivet. From the higher eminence of Olivet one gets a magnificent view of Jerusalem. The top of the Mount is today covered with a mass of ruins and Hebrew graves. A Greek church and mouldering tower crown the summit.

This triumphal entry was in direct fulfillment of a prophecy recorded in the ninth chapter of Zachariah, the ninth verse. "Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee; meek, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass." This passage may seem to indicate that Christ rode upon two animals—upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. It is very clear, however, in the Hebrew. The word translated "and," is more properly translated, "that is." He rode upon an ass, "that is to say, upon a colt, the foal of an ass."

The city of Jerusalem into which Christ entered has had an interesting history. The present city of Jerusalem is the eighth that has arisen.

Number one—built probably about 1500 B.C. This was the city captured by David.

Number two—the Jerusalem of Solomon 900 B.C. Its walls were 38½ feet high. There were seven gates and thirty-four towers. The city itself occupied an eminence shut off on the southeast by the valley of the Kedron, and on the southwest by the valley of Hinnon. The city area was divided into four distinct parts: on the southeast, Mt.

Moriah; on the southwest, Mt. Zion; on the northwest, Acra; and on the northeast, Bezetha. The Tyropeon Valley runs toward the southwest and then due south separating three of these elevations. The Kedron Valley is sometimes spoken of as the Valley of Jehoshaphat. In this valley the offal and refuse of the city were cast. Here it was that Josiah dumped the heathen rubbish, and idolatrous images of the city, when he instigated his clean-up campaign, after the wicked reign of his father, Manasseh. The fires that were constantly burning in this valley in an effort to consume the rubbish, gave it the name of Gehenna, which became a type word for hell.

Number three—the Jerusalem of Nehemiah, 444 B.C.

Number four—the Jerusalem of Herod, 60 A.D.

Number five—the Roman Jerusalem.

Number six—the Mohammedan Jerusalem.

Number seven—the Christian Jerusalem.

Number eight—the modern city which dates from sixteen or seventeen hundred A.D.

There are far more Jews in Chicago than were ever in Jerusalem, and New York would make a great many Jerusalems! The present population of Jerusalem is about 75,000.

I

HERE IS A WELCOME TO ROYALTY

This welcoming of the approaching Saviour by the spreading of garments, was typical of the welcome accorded to conquering heroes. It was superlative

homage. Jehu, when welcomed by the officers of Israel as their ruler, walked upon garments spread under his feet. (II Kings 9:13.) Agamemnon entered his palace at Mycenae walking upon costly garments spread before him; while Sir Walter Raleigh's act of gallantry before Queen Elizabeth is well known. In the east today, a similar custom prevails among some of the natives. They welcome their native Sheiks, especially upon their return from a holy pilgrimage to Mecca, by some such demonstration as this, excepting that it is much more hazardous. Men lie down prostrate with face to the ground, and while they are in this position the Sheik rides his Arabian mare over them, slowly and with some degree of care. The results are not ordinarily fatal to any individual, since the pressure of a single hoof rests but for a moment upon one part of the body of a particular man.

The ass upon which Christ rode is not by any means to be confused with the sluggish, spiritless brute common in our western countries, especially in the mountain regions. This animal upon which Christ sat, and upon which the elite of the Orient were accustomed to ride, was a fiery and spirited creature, not a weary sack of bones and flogged, moth eaten skin. The rulers rode upon white asses, and Plockhorst is correct in making this animal white. Flowers and leaves were oftentimes strewn before the conquering hero. Monier, in our own day, tells of seeing roses strewn for three miles in the pathway of a Persian conqueror. John speaks of palm branches used.

II.

HERE IS RECOGNITION AS DAVID'S SON

The group that went before Him were Galileans; they that followed, probably those from Bethany. Their cries of acclaim, "Hosanna to the Son of David," were exactly fitting to the fact. He was the Son of David, both through Mary, His mother, and Joseph, His foster father. (II Sam. 7:12-16, and I Chron. 17:10-14.)

III.

HERE IS DEFINITE CLAIM AND ANNOUNCEMENT

Christ was making here a definite claim to the throne of David and was purposely moving in such way as to literally fulfill the prophecy relating to Him. Gibson in his "Expositions of the Bible, Matthew," pages 295 to 297, makes this very clear. This was the first occasion on which our Lord distinctly put forth His claim to royalty. From the beginning of His ministry, the Saviour has been proclaiming "the gospel of the kingdom"; but when we examine carefully all He says about it, we find that He never expressly asserts that He Himself is King. Not that He conceals the all-important truth: He speaks of the kingdom in such a way that those who have ears to hear may learn that He is King Himself—as, for instance, when He says, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." One might quite readily infer from these words that Jesus Himself was King; but the claim is not thereby formally made.

"Besides, not only is it true that up to this time He did not formally assume the royal title, but He even resisted attempts made to thrust it upon Him (e.g., John 6:15). His unerring wisdom taught Him that He must reach His throne by another path than that of popular favor. Rather must it be through popular rejection—through the dark portals of despite and death; and for that, His hour had not then come.

"Now it has come. He had been steadily advancing to Jerusalem for the very purpose of accomplishing that decease which is to be the portal of His royalty. Already fully revealed as prophet, He is about to be made 'perfect through suffering' as our great High Priest. It is time, therefore, that He revealed Himself as King so that no one may have it afterwards to say that He never really claimed the throne of His father, David."

IV.

HERE IS SORROW

The Scripture declares that, as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it. Stanley in his "Sinai and Palestine," says that as one follows this southern road from Bethany to Jerusalem, one comes to a place, where, unexpectedly, the entire city bursts upon the sight. One moment not a glimpse of the city can be seen, the next moment, sweeping around the shoulder of the hill the entire panoramic view is laid before the gaze; and a beautiful sight it is. The dazzling white of the buildings with the green of the landscape, make a picture that cannot be forgotten. "Jerusalem must be seen from the east to be seen to advantage." He wept! He was pass-

ing, at the moment, over the very ground where the tenth Roman legion would be encamped forty years later, and He knew it! *"If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.* (Lu. 19:42.) He wanted to be a Saviour. They wanted a king. Is not this the constant contrast between Christ's thought and the world's? The world delights in pomp and material circumstance He delights in humility, and inward purity. He is a Saviour. The world wants a king. General Lew Wallace, in his book, "Ben Hur," makes this delightfully clear. Slowly the realization of the Saviourhood of Christ comes to Ben Hur. He seeks a king and finds a Saviour. In this triumphal entry, Christ is laying claim to His Kingdom, but they misunderstood the nature of the kingdom. He seeks a king as a Spiritual King. In their blindness they were acclaiming Him as an earthly king. It grieved His heart.

He entered into the city of Jerusalem by the gate in the eastern wall. The gate as it stands at present was erected in the fifth century, shortly after the Crusades. It was walled up by the Mohammedans, in a spiteful determination to keep the Christians out. At the time of Christ there were two parts to the gate, one for egrees and the other for ingress. The Mohammedans have a tradition that on some Friday a Christian conqueror will enter through this gate. The Moslem regime will end and the city fall before the conquering Christian prince. Their tradition is probably well founded! On December 6 and 7, 1917, the fighting in the hills west of Jerusalem and the rapid advance of a British force from Hebron caused great excitement in the city. Upon receipt of the news of the near approach of the

British, a sudden panic fell upon the Turks west and southwest of the town, and there was a furious galloping of Turkish troops along the Jaffa Road. Enthusiastic joy filled the hearts of the Jewish population, and the cry arose: "The Turks are running; the day of deliverance is come!" The Governor was the last civil official to leave the city; but before dawn, Sunday, December 9, he hastened down the Jericho Road, leaving behind him a letter of surrender, which the Mayor, as the sun arose, set forth to deliver to the British commander. The last Turkish soldier left Jerusalem at seven o'clock, by the East Gate, and the Ottoman power, which had been supreme for four centuries in the Holy City, came to an end. General Allenby, passing through the Jaffa Gate, entered the city on foot and left it on foot; and no pageantry profaned the historic solemnity of the hour.

V.

HERE IS MARVELOUS FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY

This triumphal entry took place Sunday, April 6, 32 A. D. Dr. Robert Anderson, in his book, "The Coming Prince," pages 61 and 127, shows very clearly that this entrance of Christ's into Jerusalem is direct fulfillment of the prophecy in Daniel 9:24. The commandment to rebuild the city referred to in Daniel is the commandment, record of which appears in Neh. 2:5 following. Between that date and the triumphal entry, as Anderson has very clearly shown on page 128 of the book above mentioned, exactly 69 weeks expired. The words of Christ are thus seen to bear unusual significance, as He looked off toward the city and said, "If thou had'st known

even *on this day* the things which belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." On this day of the triumphal entry, indeed, was the prophecy of Scripture literally and exactly fulfilled in a most miraculous way.

The fact is, however, that is was not begun and completed in one day. He is continually entering into the hearts of men spiritually, and, at any moment, He may triumphantly enter a heart that is surrendered to Him. He still comes, and shall come, with every triumph of righteousness, with every advance of purity and of honor; with the opening of every gate that has been barred to Him; with the steady advance of the missionary forces of the world; with repentance and awakened zeal of every devout soul, Christ comes and is coming; and He will come finally in a glorious and vivid way, as a climax to all of this, in His second personal advent.

VI.

HERE IS THE CONQUERING CHRIST

The poet caught the vision of reality when he said,

"I saw the conquerors riding by
With cruel lips and faces wan;
Musing on kingdoms sacked and burned.
There rode the Mongol, Ghenghis Khan;

And Alexander, like a god,
Who sought to wield the world in one;
And Caesar with his laurel-wreath;
And, leaping full of hell, the Hun;
And, leading like a star, the van,
Heedless of outstretched arm and groan,
Inscrutable Napoleon went,
Dreaming of empire, and alone.

Then all they perished from the earth
As fleeting shadow from a glass,
And, conquering down the centuries,
Came Christ, the Swordless, on an ass."

Mr. G. K. Chesterson has written a poem called "The Donkey," in which he declares that the brute only pretends to be dumb because he is cherishing in his heart the memory of that great day when he bore Christ, "the Swordless," in triumph into the city.

"The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me; I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet;
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet."

Mr. Peter B. Kyne's novel shows how three of the worst of men became three of the best of men. At the beginning of the book these three desperate ruffians will stop at no crime: murder and robbery are child's play to them. At the end of the book they are willing to lay down their lives in the desert if, by so doing, they can save the life of a new-born babe.

"What was it that wrought the change? They found a Bible in a wagon; and, opening it, the Youngest Bad Man read to the Wounded Bad Man, and to the Worst Bad Man the story of the ass that bore Jesus into Jerusalem. It wonderfully affected them. And, as the story unfolds, Mr. Kyne shows how the whole of their subsequent behavior was

colored by that sacred narrative. An ass figured in the Old Testament. An ass figured in the New Testament.

" 'I have sinned!' cried Balaam, after listening to that Old Testament ass.

" 'We have sinned!' cried Mr. Kyne's desperadoes, after listening to that New Testament ass."

One wonders if in all of this scene of the triumphal entry, upon which ministers have preached from time immemorial, talking in their sermons of the garments and the crowd, one wonders, I say, if in all of this they haven't been missing what is in many respects the most important feature, namely, the ass. Why can't some one give us a good sermon using this humble brute for a topic?

The acclaim of the crowd is distinctly distasteful to Jesus. He sees at once that it is largely superficial and ignorant. The upraised right hand of the Saviour indicates His desire to suppress their empty applause. Mob psychology was the same then as now. If others are shouting, every fool begins to shout.

Nowhere in art are there three more beautiful children's figures than those which appear in the middle foreground of this picture. With radiant faces and angelic forms, they cast lovely flowers in the path of the Saviour. Plockhorst has fixed the eye of the Master upon them, and not upon the older people who stand nearby. The Saviour knows that their hearts are true, and their devotion sincere.

This day has gone down in Christian history as Palm Sunday. It is the beginning of Holy Week. Many interesting customs have arisen in connection with it. In our Catholic churches, sprays of the palm tree are blessed by the priests, and given

into the hands of the worshippers, for them to carry to their homes. In countries where the palm tree is not common, branches of other trees are used. In some places, it is customary to burn the palms, and preserve the ashes for use upon Ash Wednesday. In the middle ages there was a group of worshippers known as the Palmers. They received this name from the fact that they brought back with them palms from the Holy Land. Crosses are sometimes made from the palms, and pinned upon the clothing. Many superstitious customs have arisen. The ash of the palm, and more particularly the palm branch itself, is supposed, when blessed by the priest, to exercise healing powers. It is used not infrequently as a kind of fetish.

Plockhorst has pictured the white doves of peace flying above the head of the Saviour. This is the artist's beautiful way of declaring that when Christ comes into the heart and life He brings peace. This has been the glorious experience of every child of God. He gives the peace that passes understanding.

There are some questions that we would like to ask. What would have happened if the inhabitants of Jerusalem had accepted Him? What would Rome have done? How would He have saved us? These questions display at once the limit of our knowledge, and reveal how petty and weak and ignorant we are. Thank God, He does save us! We do not have to answer these questions. We need only to love Him and trust Him, and let Him come into the heart and rule the life.

Chapter XI

"THE LAST SUPPER"

(From the Painting by Da Vinci)

Scripture Lesson: *Matthew 26:17-30.*

Text: *"And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."—Matthew 26:21.*

The Artist.

Leonardo da Vinci was one of the most extraordinarily versatile geniuses that ever lived. He was a man of singularly handsome personal appearance, powerful in physique, persuasive in conversation, and a splendid musician. He had a profound and insatiable love of knowledge. He was an architect, having been employed on the cathedral of Milan; he was a chemist; he was a machinist; he was a botanist; he was an inventor; he clearly saw the principles and prophesied the practicability of both the steamboat and the airplane. He was a poet; he was a sculptor; he was an anatomist; he was a painter; and, what is most unusual, he was a master in every one of these fields. He knew the secret of the circulation of the blood; he understood the motion of the earth and the effect of the moon upon the tides; he was familiar with the nature of fossil shells; he originated the science of hydraulics and invented the hydrometer. He was one of the most versatile and profound men that ever lived. Had it not been for the curious circumstance that his manuscripts were written in an almost undecipherable

way, written with the left hand, backhanded, and from right to left, his ideas and theories would have made a much more profound stir in his time than they did.

He was born at Castle Vinci, located between Florence and Pisa. His father was a notary at Florence and a landed proprietor at Vinci. Leonardo grew up surrounded by wealth and culture and was given every educational and social advantage. He spent thirty years in Florence, twenty years in Milan and nineteen years in wandering. His final days were passed in the patronage of Francis I of France.

The Occasion of the Picture.

The picture, "The Last Supper," was painted as a memorial to Beatrice, wife of the Duke of Milan.

The Physical History of the Picture.

Da Vinci began his work in 1494 and completed it 1497, finishing it on the contracted time. It was painted on the damp wall of the refectory, or dining-hall, of the convent connected with the church Santa Maria della Grazie (Saint Mary of the Graces). The wall was entirely unsuited for the background and the picture, being painted in oil, was in ruins before fifty years had passed. Inside of ten years flakes were peeling off and cracks appearing; damp and dust and mold had covered the picture. In 1652 a door was cut in the wall by the careless and ignorant monks, removing the feet of the Saviour. In 1726 the picture was rather ruthlessly restored, and in 1770 was again retouched. In 1796 Napoleon's calvary stabled their horses in the hall and the soldiers amused themselves by throwing missiles at the picture. In 1800 the hall was used as a storage

place for hay, after having been flooded. A few years later, under the Austrians, the arms of Austria were nailed to the wall over the head of Christ.

In 1853 attempt was made to retouch and restore the picture with somewhat indifferent success. In 1908 Professor Cavenaghi spent months of work upon its restoration and discovered that a surprising amount of the original work of Leonardo survived. He discovered in fact that only the left hand of Christ and the table immediately about it had been entirely repainted. In 1924, during the month of October, the latest work of restoration was begun by Orestes Silverti. By using a hypodermic needle and a special compound, the original picture is being restored surprisingly by this skillful workman. A steam-heating plant has been installed in the place in an effort to prevent further deterioration of the picture.

The Technique of the Picture.

Leonardo gave to this picture his very best thought and skill at the prime of his life. The prior of the convent was constantly urging him to hurry. Leonardo would sometimes stand for three hours at a time looking intently at his work, studying profoundly and not moving out of his tracks. The good prior, who thought an artist should work rapidly, annoyed him so that Leonardo declared to a friend that he was having trouble finding a head and face evil enough for Judas but that, if all other sources failed, he was quite sure the head of the prior would serve admirably. His direct word to the prior was more courteous. He said, in response to his repeated demands for speed, "A picture is not wrought by hands alone, good padre, but by thought. In the

interior life it first must start and grow to form and color in the soul."

The picture required an unusual amount of time because each character was drawn from real life.

Leonardo's great problem was to avoid monotony. The group of thirteen figures around a long table was a very difficult thing to achieve without monotonous lines. His note-book reveals his experimentation in this matter. His purpose was to portray the reaction of the disciples to Christ's announcement, "One of you shall betray me." That he admirably succeeded is the opinion of all critics.

This is a superb example of dramatic pantomime. Some one has declared that if the heads were removed, the hands alone would tell the story. It is a tense dramatic scene. The pent-up, over-wrought atmosphere of tension is relieved by windows in the background out of which one looks upon a typical Italian scene. It is a subtle and delightful psychological touch on the part of the painter and gives relief from what would otherwise be an almost overpowering dramatic situation.

Every line of the picture converges in the right eye of the Saviour. Technically this picture is one of the most perfect in the world. The long expanse of table is divided into five equal portions, one portion being occupied by each of the four groups of disciples, the middle portion being that which extends from hand to hand of the Saviour and being exactly coextensive with the space between the two lateral windows of the background.

The groups of disciples composed of three men each are separate and yet are joined by the hands and arms of individuals, a very splendid technical touch upon the part of the artist. The figures are

all one and a half times life size. Years of study went into the production of this picture. The artist made individual studies of each of the characters and sought to portray exactly what he thought would be their specific reaction to the dramatic announcement of Christ. Bartholomew, at the extreme left end of the table, springs up with his feet still crossed, grasping the table in his hands and peering intently before him. James, the younger, next to him, reaches his hand over behind Andrew and lays it upon the shoulder of Peter who is, in turn, questioning John. Peter holds in his hand a knife with which he is unconsciously jabbing Judas in the back. Judas, with dark and evil face, clutches the money bag and inadvertently overturns the salt-cellar. There is art here, there is psychology, there is the most beautiful and effective kind of subtle technique. In the East, to upset the salt is considered a sign of impending evil. The Saviour, of course, forms the central figure of the group. Tense as the action is and vivid as are the attitudes of the other men, He is the supreme figure and the center of attraction.

Pass now to the characters on the left hand side of the Saviour. Thomas raises his finger as though to say, "You say, one shall betray?" James, the elder, swings wide his arms in protestation of horror at such a thought, while Philip, young and mild, leans forward with hands pressed to breast as though to make remonstrance at the idea and to declare his own innocence. Matthew points boldly to the traitor and declares to Simon, who is seated at the end of the table, "There he is." Simon meanwhile holds out both palms as though in doubt, a characteristic Jewish gesture, as though to say, "How am I to know that"; while Thaddeus, with a cautious

gesture of the thumb, also indicates Judas, as much as to say, "I suspected it."

Returning to the right hand of the Saviour, we see Andrew, behind whose shoulder the arm of James the younger is passed, holding his hands up and open in vivid expression of amazement and horror. Notice, too, the sharp contrast between the features of Judas and those of John. It is a superb bit of art that the intervening face of Peter, so far from detracting from this contrast, lends emphasis and point to it.

The setting of the table is an exact duplication of that which was observed during those years and has through all of the succeeding years been followed in that refectory. The table linen with knotted corners, and the folds, and the careful arrangement upon the table of the dishes are all absolutely true to life and custom.

The picture occupies the wall above the door by which the visitor enters; that is to say, as one goes into the refectory the picture is at his back. The visitor faces, as he enters, a raised platform on which is placed the table where the prior and his monks are served. On the floor below the platform are the tables for the ordinary monks so that at meals the monks find themselves between the raised platform of the prior on one hand, and the picture of The Last Supper on the other, making a most beautiful and significant setting.

John, who knows himself above suspicion, is the only one who maintains, during this dramatic moment an attitude of dignified poise and quiet confidence.

The head of the Christ was the despair of Leonardo both from the technical point of view and

the artistic. He declared to one of his confidential friends that he did not know how to paint that.

> "Vainly my pencil struggles to express
> The sorrowing grandeur of such holiness.
> In patient thought, in ever seeking prayer
> I strive to shape that glorious face within;
> But the soul's mirror dulled and dimmed by sin
> Reflects not yet the perfect image there."

He asked the aged painter, Zenale, for advice. Zenale said to him, "The mistake you have committed, Leonardo, is so great that only God can repair it. It is not in your power or in that of any one else to present a higher measure of beauty and divinity than you have already given to the two Jameses. Therefore you ought to let well-enough alone and leave the Christ uncompleted." It is evident that Leonardo followed in large part the advice. He himself declared he was unable to paint properly so wonderful a thing as the eyes of the Saviour. They are therefore down-cast.

In Judas, as in the other characters, he followed a model, and the model in this case was a perfect antithesis of Christ. There is a restlessness, a covetousness and evil displayed in the face of of Judas that is almost demoniac. There is in his attitude an excitement bordering upon distress. Before Leonardo's time Judas had always been pictured seated alone upon the opposite side of the table. Leonardo's splendid psychology and dramatic power is evidenced by the fact that he has placed Judas in his proper position amidst the twelve, and thereby adds tragedy and strength to his picture. Judas is in the very act of reaching out his hand for the sop as Christ says "He that dippeth his hands with me in the dish, he it is that betrayeth

me." Other painters who have dealt with this subject have followed the words of only one of the Gospel accounts. Leonardo, in his painting, compiles the story from all of the Gospel accounts and makes his scene accordingly.

What Is in the Picture?

I have already spoken of this in some detail in describing the individual characters. It remains, however, to point out two or three especially prominent features.

1. *Here is impulsiveness.* Nowhere is the impulsive character of Peter more vividly portrayed than in this masterpiece of Leonardo.

Impulsively he crowds over, almost pushing Judas out of place in his eagerness to inquire of John the name of the traitor. It is a delicious bit of psychology and of character delineation; the knife in his hand, the arm pushing Judas' head down into his his neck and the whole tense eager attitude of inquiry which the body reveals, spells one thing,—impetuosity. This is our dearly beloved and well-known Peter without doubt. A study of the detail of Peter's head adds force to this point.

2. *Here are greed and treachery.* They are consummately pictured in the facial expression and bodily attitude and movement of the hands and form of Judas. He betrays excitement and fear, resentment and anger, and all of the dark and evil passions that were surging up in the depths of his soul. The clenched hand convulsed upon the money bag speaks more plainly than words and reveals the man's heart.

3. *Here is scholarly intensity.* Bartholomew gives evidence to it. His profound look as, bent over,

questioning his own ears, he tries to discern the real meaning of the Saviour's words, reveals the character of this scholarly man in a most true way. Bartholomew was the thinker of the group, and so he is grappling with this suddenly raised and strangely new and difficult problem.

4. *Here is horror.* It is betrayed by James the elder. Some one has declared that in no place in the art of the world are there more eloquent hands than these. The downcast and protesting look of the face, the arms flung out, the body drawn back, all are expressive of the utmost repugnance and protest.

5. *Here are pleading and acquiescence.* These effects are graphically presented in the hands of the Saviour. The right hand is palm down, but slightly raised, the left with palm upturned. Da Vinci himself declared that he meant by this a complete acquiescence, as though Christ were saying with the right hand, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me," but with the left upturned, "yet not my will but thine be done," and as though He would say to His disciples in answer to their protest, "It is even so and not otherwise."

6. *Finally, here is the utmost diversity.* Every one of these men gives expression in his own way to his own personality under the stress of this crucial moment. Is it not a profoundly true bit of psychology? Do we not all, in our relationship to Christ and in the great moments of life, do the thing which only we could do? Leonardo was certainly not only a great artist but a great psychologist. Our relationship to Christ is absolutely personal. The heart of Christianity is in our individual attitude to, and knowledge of, Christ. This great ser-

mon in art teaches that fully. The fullness of the Saviour is sufficient to meet every need of every personality, no matter how we may differ among ourselves. One could perhaps not close the study in a more fitting way than to quote Wordsworth's words:

"Tho' searching damps and many an envious flaw
Have marred this work; the calm ethereal grace,
The love deep-seated in the Saviour's face,
The mercy, goodness, have not failed to awe
The Elements; as they do melt and thaw
The heart of the Beholder—and erase
(At least for one rapt moment) every trace
Of disobedience to the primal law.
The annunciation of the dreadful truth
Made to the Twelve, survives: lip, forehead, cheek,
And hand reposing on the board in ruth
Of what it utters, while the unguilty seek
Unquestionable meanings—still bespeak
A labor worthy of eternal youth!"

Chapter XII

"CHRIST BEFORE PILATE"

(From the Painting by Munkacsy)

Scripture Lesson: *Matthew 27:11-14, 19-26.*

The Artist.

The reader is referred to the sermon on "The Crucifixion" for a description of the life and work of Munkacsy.

The Picture.

The canvas was of tremendous size. The atmosphere is tense and dramatic. Munkacsy here resorts to the same device used by Da Vinci in his "Last Supper." He places the windows at the back of the room in order that the view of the distant landscape may bring, in some measure, relaxation to overdrawn nerves. Through these windows the highly charged atmosphere finds vent. The pent-up emotions of the throng are relieved by this artistic and technical touch. It had become fashionable some years ago to criticize Munkacsy by saying the scenes which he attempted to depict were of such tragic and colossal nature as to be entirely beyond his power, or the power of any other, to faithfully portray. The fact of the matter is that he is now coming more and more to be recognized as a man of tremendous genius, who handled in a faithful and skillful way the scenes which he portrayed. Munkacsy knew his Bible, and nowhere is his acquaintance with it made more manifest than in this

picture. He has grasped the essence of this scene in a wonderful way, and has dramatically reflected the emotions of those present. Just as Da Vinci sought to fix the expression and attitude of the disciples at the moment when Christ said, "One of you shall betray me," so Munkacsy, in this picture, seeks to catch and fix the action of the mob when Pilate said, "What shall I do with Jesus, who is called the Christ?" This question, which has come down through the ages, continues to arouse the identical emotions represented here.

What Is in the Picture?

Here is

I

UNGOVERNABLE RAGE

Nowhere in art is there a more striking personification of blind, awful fury, than that which we see in the figure of the man with his upraised arms. One can see the coarse brutality of his face. The hatred and fury of his heart are reflected in every line of his body, as he shouts out, in answer to Pilate's question, "Crucify Him." Here is the fury of sin at God's righteousness. So, still, do those act who are servants of sin. Here, in the contrast between this figure and that of the Saviour, one sees pictured the deadly war between good and evil. Christianity is militant. Christ declared, "I come to bring a sword." We are in the midst of a terrific contest between good and evil, and we are the cause of the contest. The city of Man-soul is the prize for which the forces of evil and good contend. Buddhism is impassive in the face of social wrongs. Christianity loves man so ardently that it hates passionately that which destroys man. The greater the love, the more intense the hatred for the thing

which would destroy the one loved. Let it be perfectly understood that there is no question as to the final outcome of this warfare between good and evil. Satan is powerful, but not so powerful as God, and the outcome is certain. Christ stands quietly. This man who typifies the rage of sin is blatant and vocal. He seems to dominate the scene. It is, however, only apparent and not real. The strongest forces in the universe are the forces of righteousness. They are not vociferously vocal. They are quietly irresistible. They do not grow red faced and angry. They simply operate. (Matt. 21: 44.) The question asked so long ago by Pilate, continues to give occasion for ungovernable rage on the part of those who are the bond-servants of sin. Like their forerunner pictured here by Munkacsy, they cry out in burning fury, "Let Him be crucified."

Here is

II

IMPUDENT INSOLENCE

It is personified, by the artist-preacher, in the man who leans over, impudently leering into the face of Christ. This is sheer unadulterated insolence. His reaction to the question of Pilate is one of flippant curiosity. There is no depth of thought in his whole being. He is incapable of recognizing important matters. There are those today who treat the question flippantly. They are spiritual descendants of this shallow worldling. They are pert disbelievers. They treat the holiest things of life in such way as to bring upon themselves the lasting condemnation of all earnest men. They disbelieve. They have no faith. They are crude, crass, ignorant and brutish. They know so little, they do not know how little they know. There

is no depth or sincerity in them. They would put their feet on the holy place. In the presence of the greatest question of all time and eternity, they peer around with gaping mouth and curious eyes, to stare insolently into the face of the Saviour. There are such present in every congregation.

Here is

III

IMPASSIVITY

The Roman soldier who stands with his back to the spectator is the personification of this trait. He is coldly impersonal. He looks upon the entire tumultuous scene as one in which he has no immediate concern. His sole duty is to preserve order. He represents the chilling indifference of the civil law. He typifies in a pathetic way the utter impotence of the civil law. Here in the midst of one of the supreme crises of earth, the civil law stands aloof and powerless. Is it not always true of the civil law? How partial and inadequate it is! How inappropriate it is. How artificial it is. What possible connection is there between stealing five thousand dollars and spending five, ten or twenty years in prison. The whole connection is entirely artificial and superficial. It represents the best effort on the part of men to visit crime with punishment, but after we have done all we can in wisdom in this connection, our best efforts are pathetic. The civil law cannot strike sin until it puts its head out of the door of the heart. So long as a man keeps his anger, his jealousy, his covetousness, his lust, in his heart, the civil law is powerless to touch him.

Not so God's law. God's law asks no question of bolts or doors or bars. God's law penetrates into the darkest recesses of the heart, and there, from

the deepest corners, routs our sin out to judgment. Never warming our hands in the blood of our fellows, we may go through life, their murderers. Never unseating a friend from one of his possessions, we may, according to God's law, be a thief. Never once committing the outward act, we may go through life lecherous, impure, unclean; all of this because God's law is not like the civil law. It is not external but internal. It is not material but spiritual. It concerns itself not so much with outward acts as with inward attitudes. Let no one mistake. The author believes in law. Those who declare we have too many laws, and that we must have fewer laws, convict themselves out of their own mouths of shallow thinking. The closer nations draw together, the more intricate and involved become their relationships. This condition necessitates more laws. The matter can be made very clear in an illustration.

A hundred years ago no laws were necessary for automobile traffic. Now every village must have them. Fifty years ago there were no laws necessary for the control of airplanes and dirigibles, but when a great airship empties itself disastrously upon a New York office building, people discover that we must have laws to regulate the building and the operation of such machines. The more intricate and advanced our civilization becomes, the more necessary will be the passing and observance of laws to regulate our intercourse. We believe in law. There is much sophomoric talk these days about repealing laws in order to lessen crime. One had as well break the looking glass in order to clean one's face. The looking glass does not create the dirt on one's face. It only shows it. Laws do not create criminals—they only reveal them.

We must, however, be constantly on our guard against putting too great faith in laws. We must remember constantly that civil law cannot reach the springs of the heart. Maude Royden, the great woman preacher of England, declares that we Americans have *"a pathetic faith in legislation."* The phrase is arresting. Legislation is only a safeguard, a hedge. The real work is done in the heart. This is strikingly true of the prohibition amendment. It is a wise, Godly, necessary, just, and permanent measure. It is no attempt to legislate morality. It is only a safeguard thrown about young life. It is a determined purpose to protect those who are weak. It must be enforced, and it will be enforced. We must, however, along with it, maintain constantly the work of education, and of spiritual direction, which will get into the hearts of men and make them the kind of men who will not want to disobey this law or any others. All of this is set forth in Munkacsy's figure of the stalwart Roman soldier who typifies the civil law. Perfectly powerless, perfectly aloof, perfectly indifferent in the presence of the tragic spiritual drama being unfolded before him!

Here is

IV

GLOATING SATISFACTION

It shows in every line of the face and figure of the corpulent priest, sitting with feet spread far apart. His right arm set akimbo, his lips tightly closed, his piercing eyes gleaming with satisfaction, all seem to say, "Now we have trapped you!"

The priesthood was corrupt. Christ had aroused their enmity by winning the hearts of the people. His popularity and His teachings were threatening their sources of revenue. They hated Him with all

the passion of their withered souls. They had grown fat on the superstition of the people. They were given over entirely to ceremonial and ritualistic observances. They had so hedged themselves in with these requirements as to utterly lose touch with the deep spiritual needs of the people. Their attitude toward the Sabbath day was characteristic of their entire instruction. So punctilious were they in their requirements, so absurd and extreme in the things which they required, that the day had become a great burden and curse, instead of a blessing and a joy. Craft, covetousness and even physical oppression were not unknown in their attitude toward the people. Annas, the high priest emeritus, of the time, was cordially despised by the mass of the population. His sons beat the citizens with staves. He was a tyrant and despot of the deepest die. He was a haughty, overbearing, insolent and abusive ecclesiastical dictator. The whole trial of Christ, both ecclesiastical and civil, was a mockery and farce, and was due to the determination of these priests to put Him to death.

Here is

V

POLITICAL EVASIVENESS

Pilate presents here an altogether contemptible figure. He cordially despised every Jew in the mob, from the most humble artisan, to the broadest phylacteried Pharisee. He would have liked to crush every one of them under his heel, but he dared not do so. Confronted with a case which promised to be unpleasant and humiliating, he sought to deny jurisdiction and evade responsibility, and to shift it into the court of another judge. Herod, to whom he had transferred the responsibility, refused to

accept it, and chuckling, no doubt, at his cleverness, sent it back to his luckless contemporary, Pilate. Pilate was, incidentally, Herod's personal enemy. (Luke 23:12.) "They became friends that day," the Scripture declares.

The author is aware of the many beautiful things that have been said in connection with this verse, relative to the power of Christ, even in the hour of His extreme necessity, to bring together in friendship, two estranged hearts. He hesitates to blast any such beautiful thought, but fidelity to history compels him to say that the friendship which sprang up on this occasion between Pilate and Herod was based not on their mutual contact with Christ, but rather on their mutual participation in a dastardly plot to murder the emperor, Caesar Augustus, and to have part in the division of the empire. This is Roman history.

Pilate throughout the entire scene presents a most despicable spectacle. The Greek church has made him a saint. All that can be said is that they chose extremely poor material. He was a miserable time server. A cowardly sail trimmer, seeking to get through life as smoothly and easily as possible.

In the author's library is a curious book called "Letters from Hell." One of them is from Pilate and describes how he constantly washes his hands at a brook that flows through those infernal regions in an effort to cleanse them. There are still those who adopt much the same attitude in the presence of this question of the text. They seek to evade it. They desire to offend no one or jeopardize aught in answering the question. They risk their eternal salvation for present convenience and comfort. What an opportunity Pilate lost. He had dared defy the Jews before. Why did he not stand upon

his feet and, with all the authority that was his, backed by the Roman army, compel this mob of blood-thirsty villains to cease from their efforts to take an innocent life?

Here is

VI

GODLY WARNING

Munkacsy sought to represent, by the figure standing before Christ, the person of Nicodemus. Tradition declares that Nicodemus made his way to the trial, and there cautioned Pilate to release Christ. It is this tradition which Munkacsy has represented. Howsoever true the story may be, the fact is that the minister pleads, and the Holy Spirit pleads, as this question, uttered so long ago, comes thundering down the vale of years, knocking at the heart. No crisis of life is reached; no great decision faced, without the presence and pleading of God's Holy Spirit. Our ears are ofttimes heavy, our spiritual powers sluggish and dull, and we do not respond. Our salvation and our welfare both here and hereafter are determined by our hearing and heeding this voice of Godly warning. We are never left alone in the hour of temptation and of trial. If we will but hear God's voice, we may escape the peril and be led out into that conduct which shall strengthen our souls and bring eternal glory to our name.

Here is

VII

WORLDLY HESITANCY

This is remarkably pictured by the three old men, who are seen just under the outstretched arm of Nicodemus. Their heads are close together. Their

hands and fingers are engaged in characteristic Jewish gestures, very familiar to one who sees their descendants consulting on the streets of Chicago. These men are debating the entire matter. They love to debate. They were like the Scotchman, who, even at the point of death, whispered into his friend's ear, as he pulled him down beside him, "Sandy, let's have an argument." They debated the number of angels that could stand on the point of a pin. They debated whether or no it was proper to eat eggs bought in a stall in a street along which a leper had passed. They argued at great length as to what was permitted and what was prohibited on the Sabbath day. They drew up specifications and outlines, as to what constituted plowing and reaping, and the bearing of burdens, deciding that if one dragged a chair across the lawn so that it left a mark, he was guilty of plowing. They decided that it was a violation of the Sabbath laws for a tailor to have a needle stuck in his coat. This was the bearing of burdens. We remember how Christ and His disciples were accused of thrashing because they rubbed out a few kernels of wheat in the palm of the hand on the Sabbath day. They were absurdly punctilious in the observance of these trifling things. The author himself, who is a Gentile, has been called upon by some of his Orthodox Jewish neighbors to come into their home to kindle fire in the grate on the Sabbath. By an oversight the fire had been allowed to go out. They could prepare the kindling and make everything ready, but they could not strike the match. He very gladly did it for them. So silly and trifling is worldly hesitancy.

These men were debating the question, "What shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?" Oh, that they might have the wisdom to put aside all such casuistry and hesitancy! How sinful such worldly questioning is. What is the wisest course? What is the most politic action? Which way will prove the most advantageous? All of these questions spring to mind, and find place in the life and heart of those who hesitate. Why cannot man realize that the world, as weighed against the soul, must always kick the beam. "What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" God help all who are afflicted with this worldly hesitation to shake themselves from it, and to give open and full allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is

VIII

TENDER LOVE AND SURRENDER

This is beautifully symbolized in the mother and child, whom Munkacsy has set forth in such a tender way in the immediate background. The winsomeness and the gentleness of Christ always attracted the hearts of women and of tender children. One of the marks of greatness in any man is the love of little children. Our Saviour Himself declared that it was only as we become like children, with simple, confiding faith, with unshakable devotion, that we enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. This mother and child rise from the angry sea of stormy passions, in striking contrast thereto. Their faces are serene and beautiful. They look directly at Christ, and have eyes only for Him. Womanhood and childhood have always been attracted to Him.

A woman was last at the cross, and first at the tomb, *and it was not a woman who betrayed Him!*

Here is

IX

GOD

The central figure in the picture is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is unperturbed. He is utterly calm and self-possessed. Toward the close of this day Pilate was moved to wonder at Him. Amid all the turbulent scenes of the day, Christ had maintained majestic poise. Even the callous soul of the Roman was brought finally to bow in wonder before the thorn-crowned Man. The terrors of the unseen were taking hold upon the Roman governor, as he asked, "Whence art thou?"

The figure of Christ is in white against the black background. It is Munkacsy's way of calling especial attention to Him. His position is central and dramatic. The cords bind His wrists, but the serene bearing of His presence is what sinks deeply into the soul.

Munkacsy is saying to us here that Jesus Christ was not drawn to His death by the iron teeth of circumstance. "Thou hast no power over me, save as it is given thee from above." "I have power to lay my life down and I have power to take it up." This consideration thrills the heart. Christ voluntarily laid down His life, a sacrifice for us. He stands friendless and forsaken and yet strong in His Deity. He is God.

> "Jesus is standing in Pilate's hall—
> Friendless, forsaken, betrayed by all:
> Hearken! what meaneth the sudden call?
> What will you do with Jesus?

"What will you do with Jesus?
Neutral you cannot be;
Some day your heart will be asking,
'What will He do with me?'

"Jesus is standing on trial still,
You can be false to Him if you will,
You can be faithful thro' good or ill:
What will you do with Jesus?

"Will you evade Him as Pilate tried?
Or will you choose Him, whate'er betide?
Vainly you struggle from Him to hide:
What will you do with Jesus?

"Will you, like Peter, your Lord deny?
Or will you scorn from His foes to fly
Daring for Jesus to live or die?
What will you do with Jesus?

" 'Jesus, I give Thee my heart today!
Jesus, I'll follow Thee all the way,
Gladly obeying Thee!' will you say:
'This will I do with Jesus!' "

Chapter XIII

"THE CRUCIFIXION"

(From the Painting by Munkacsy)

Scripture Lesson: Luke *23:34-49.*

The Artist.

The painter of this picture is Michael Munkacsy. His real name was Michael Lieb. He was born at the little Hungarian village of Munkacs in 1844. It was only after he had achieved distinction that he was affectionately called Munkacsy by his fellow-countrymen in loving recognition of the renown he had brought his native village. His childhood was one of privation and sorrow. His mother died shortly after his birth and his father, who was a political revolutionist, became involved in the war with Russia and was taken prisoner where he languished for a number of years in jail. When little Mickie was about five years old his father was condemned and sentenced to death. This occurrence made a very vivid impression on the mind of the little child—so vivid indeed that he used the incident for the theme of his first successful picture. An aunt adopted him, but tragically enough, she and her husband were murdered a short while later by bandits who robbed their home. An uncle took the little chap and apprenticed him to a carpenter. This life was distasteful to Michael and at the age of fourteen he ran away from home and went to Ared where he worked as a carpenter, but only enough to

gain the bare necessities of living. Most of his time was spent in art galleries where he studied and copied pictures. Due to privation and hardship of living, he was taken sick and was sent home to his uncle. It is said he used to sing for his own comfort the popular song, "Who Should I Mourn as Though There Were No Sorrow but Mine." This shady and unfortunate childhood left an indelible impression on Munkacsy. His eye saw the world in blackness and yet even from the depths there loomed a certain light and color. His work abounds in somber shades like that of Rembrandt. He was a master of chiaroscuro. He delighted in the tragic and tense. He earned his first good coat by painting the portraits of the tailor's family. His first picture was worthless. His second was little better, but the third was a great masterpiece, "The Last Day of the Condemned Man." This picture was a representation of his father's last day, as impressed upon his child mind in those bitter days of his boyhood.

In the International Exhibition of 1889, he won the gold medal with his "Christ Before Pilate." This painting, with "The Crucifixion" and "Ecce Homo," rank among his most famous productions. These three have been exhibited around the world. "The Crucifixion" is in the private art gallery of the late John Wanamaker in Philadelphia, who is reported to have paid $150,000 for it. "Ecce Homo" is also in this gallery. "Christ Before Pilate" is in America. "Ecce Homo" was Munkacsy's last work. He worked upon it feverishly among the growing shadows of the fatal disease which was inherited in his family, and it is reported that just three hours after having finished and signed the painting, he fell unconscious from this malady against which he had been fighting for so many months, and was carried to

the sanitarium at Edenich. Happily his recovery after a few months there, was sufficient to permit his return to his palatial home where, however, he died in the year 1900.

His picture, "The Last Day of a Condemned man," is in the possession of Mrs. W. E. Wilstach, of Philadelphia. Thus, most of Munkacsy's famous pictures have found a home in America.

The Technique of the Picture.

"The Crucifixion," like most of Munkacsy's work, is done on a colossal scale. He is sometimes criticised for trying to depict scenes of such intense feeling and tragic atmosphere, but the fact remains that practically all of his paintings deal with such dramatic moments and, if he does not depict to the very fullest extent the tenseness of the scenes, he does as well in that direction or better than any other painter who has lived. It has become quite the fashion in later days to criticise his work, but authorities now are coming more and more to declare that no painting of the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries has excelled or indeed approached in vividness of execution the dramatic and moving power of Munkacsy's "Crucifixion" or "Christ Before Pilate." His backgrounds are black and forbidding. Like Rembrandt, his foreground characters usually stand out in a blaze of light. In this painting, upon which we are to think, his figures are one and a half times life-size.

This painting has created a profound impression. It was exhibited at one time in Hamilton, Ontario, where it was set off in a room by itself with heavy velvet draperies about it and artistically lighted. The whole setting was such as to cause a most profound emotion in the hearts of the beholders.

The story is told that a sailor asked of the keeper

somewhat breathlessly, "Is Jesus here?" On being questioned, he said he came to see Jesus and, throwing down the admittance price as he was directed to do, he swaggered into the room where the picture was being displayed. As he saw it, instantly his manner changed and he sat down in a chair before it, looking with the most earnest intensity upon it. In a few moments his hat came off. Continuing intently to study the figure of Christ and the faces of the group surrounding the Saviour, he became more and more reverent until in a few moments his face was in his hands and the tears were trickling through his fingers. After having spent more than an hour before the picture, he tiptoed reverently out of the room and said to the keeper, "My mother urged me to come here to see this. I am a sailor and in my time have been a rough man, but from this time on I purpose to be better for the sake of Him and by the grace of Him who hung there on the cross for me." The experience of this rough sailor could be duplicated many times.

Munkacsy's dramatic air and artistic ability are so great as to drive home in irresistible way the tragic message of the cross of Christ. A group of ministers, some of them from Chicago and friends of the author, recently stood before this scene; every heart was filled with reverence and awe; every eye was fixed upon the great central figure on the cross. They stood in utter silence for some time before the picture, each man busy with his own thoughts and searching his own heart. Finally they turned to go. At the door one of them stopped, looked back, and with tear-dimmed eye and choking voice said to his companions, "I hate to leave Him there alone."

Munkacsy, in this picture, has attempted to depict the sixth hour, when the darkness came over all the

earth. Christ was crucified about nine o'clock in the morning (Mark 15: 25), and from noon until three o'clock there was darkness (Matt. 27 : 46 ; Mark 15: 34, Luke 23: 44). Jesus died about 3.00 P. M. The synoptists follow the Jewish method of numbering the hours of the day, beginning at 6.00 P. M. and running until midnight, and from midnight to 6.00 A. M. John, in his Gospel, follows the Roman or modern way of numbering the hours, from midnight to midnight. Thus, the apparent discrepancy in the two accounts is harmonized. Jesus was arrested in the early hours of Friday morning, was taken before Pilate about seven o'clock in the morning and was on the cross about nine o'clock. At noon the darkness came, and at three o'clock in the afternoon Christ died.

What Is in the Picture?

1. *Notice first the inscription on the cross.* It was written in Latin, Greek and Hebrew. Munkacsy has painted there the letters I-N-R-I, abbreviations for "Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum." These are the Latin words for "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." Helena, mother of the Emperor, Constantine, claimed to have discovered and brought back with her from Jerusalem a bit of the wood on which this inscription was written.

2. *Notice the cross itself.* Munkacsy here makes it the right height. Many of us think of Christ's having been nailed to the cross while it was still on the ground. This is not altogether correct. The upright piece was ordinarily placed in the ground first, and the cross piece itself was carried to the scene by the prisoner. The hands were nailed thereto and then the prisoner and the piece were lifted by ropes to their place and made fast to the upright by nails or ropes, or sometimes both. In

the picture, the cross upon which the thief hangs to the right of the picture, illustrates this procedure. The ropes are still in place by which he and the cross piece were lifted into proper position. The feet were sometimes nailed, but were sometimes bound by ropes, as is shown also in the case of the thief on the right hand side of the picture. A peg was usually set in the middle of the upright piece upon which the body might rest. Sometimes the body was bound at the middle with ropes, as is shown in the case of the thief on the left hand side of the picture. Never, however, was there a foot rest provided for the body as Munkacsy has shown in the case of Christ. This is the only inaccuracy in the picture.

There were three kinds of crosses commonly used. First, the *Crux decussata;* this was in the form of the letter "X." Second, the *crux commissa;* this was in the form of the letter "T." Third, the *crux immissa;* this was the form upon which Christ was crucified, the upright extending above the cross-piece.

In 326 Constantine desired to build a church on the site of the crucifixion. His mother, Helena, in company with Bishop Macarius, endeavored to identify the spot. In spite of the fact that Emperor Hadrian 200 years before had made it utterly unrecognizable, excavations were begun which finally revealed a cave in which three crosses were reported to have been found. The problem then, of course, was to identify the one upon which Christ hung. This was done, we are told, by bringing a woman sick with what was regarded as an incurable disease. She touched the first two crosses without any visible effect, but, having laid her hand on the third, instantly was made whole. Tradition declares

that the nails and also the wood upon which the inscription had been written were also found. For 800 years this cross was an object of the most profound reverence on the part of the Roman Catholic Church. It was carefully boxed in a casket of gold and jewels. Splinters of it were sold for fabulous prices with the amazing result, however, that the volume of wood contained therein was not visibly diminished! In the year 1187 on the 5th day of July the Crusaders carried it with them into the battle of Hattim where it was captured by the Saracens. It has since that time been utterly lost. One cannot but be glad that the church does not have this relic. What a temptation to idolatry it would be!

There are many interesting legends of the cross, none of which can be accepted by thoughtful people, but which are interesting to recall briefly. One is to the effect that when Adam and Eve left the Garden, they carried with them a staff which was a piece of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; indeed, the very branch that bore the fruit, eating which they had sinned. Adam carried this staff about with him until, in his wanderings, he came to Jerusalem. There he stuck it in the ground and there it grew to a tree. From the wood of this tree, this legend says, the cross was made.

Another legend is to the effect that Abraham, in his journey from Ur of the Chaldeans, came down to the River Jordan where he found a weeping shepherd. Abraham directed him to plant, as a token of penitence, three trees by Jordan. This the shepherd did, setting out a cedar, a cypress and a pine. The legend declares that in forty days they were full grown, but had curiously united into one trunk. When Solomon set out to build his temple, he endeavored to use the wood of this tree for certain

ornamental uses, but strangely enough, could not split it. Understanding, therefore, that it was intended for some holy use, he caused it to be placed in the temple upon a pedestal with thirty silver rings about it. This wood, the legend declares, was used for the cross and the thirty silver rings were given to Judas.

The little crosses which the tourists buy in Jerusalem and other places are almost always made of cypress wood.

The Greeks have a legend that the cross was made from mistletoe, which was once a very strong tree, but which since that time has degenerated, because of this accursed use, until now it is a miserable parasite. The Romans declared that the cross was made of aspen wood and since that time the leaves of the aspen have never ceased to tremble in remorse and apprehension. These are simply fanciful tales, unworthy, of course, of any credence. They only illustrate the length to which men's fancy goes and serve to make evident the inspiration of the self-restrained, dignified Scriptural account of these things.

Turning now to the human side of the picture, we see certain great realities portrayed.

I

HERE IS INDIFFERENCE

It is supremely portrayed in the Roman soldiery. See the man with the ladder! He is dull, heavy, stolid, brutal. Like Markham's description of "The Man with the Hoe," one might almost say "He is the brother of the ox." He has done his brutal work and it is simply a part of the day's work. No less indifferent is the soldier seated in the right foreground with the spear. These men are the per-

sonification of sluggish, senseless indifference. They had eyes but saw not; they had ears but heard not. They have many descendants today. "Sitting down, they watched him." They did not know they were figures in the world's greatest tragedy. Little did they realize they were actors in the drama which would make millions weep. So silently do the great things of God come to pass! That which is most important is usually the least noisy. Had Caesar been coming to town, how excited they would have been! But Jesus, the King, had died and they are utterly unmoved and wholly indifferent. Our prayer should be the prayer of Elisha the prophet, "Open the young man's eyes that he may see." A prayer meeting attracts no attention; the coming of the Queen of Roumania sets all hearts a-flutter; but in all the reaches of eternity a prayer meeting is more important than the coming of any or all the kings and queens of the earth.

Browning in his poem, "The Epistle of Karkish," describes, in the words of the doctor, a most unusual case. This doctor has met a man who is strangely indifferent to that which sets other people a-tremble with excitement; and things that other people do not notice, set him all a-flutter with apprehension. If the king comes to town or if his little child is sick, this strange man manifests very slight concern, but if a little child gives vent to a burst of profanity, the man's face goes white. The secret is that the man's name is Lazarus and, having come back from the other side, he has brought with him and retains a true sense of the relative importance of things. He has gotten the view-point of eternity. God help us to catch it. These indifferent soldiers did not have it. They were indifferent to that which was of eternal significance and were con-

cerned greatly about those things which were of no worth.

These men were coarse brutal fellows. They were fresh from Egypt. They blindfolded Jesus and struck Him and told Him to declare who it was that had hit Him. This was a coarse game of horseplay that was a native of Egypt. They had brought it with them from that country. They had no doubt just returned from service in one of the regiments assigned to Egyptian duty.

II

HERE IS GRIEF

Here is bitter, passionate, self-forgetful grief. See the agonized forms of the love-garmented women as they bow themselves in paroxysms of grief about the foot of the cross. There is Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jesus, Salome and Mary the wife of Cleophas. Let the curious look on and mock and jeer. These women give unrestrained expression to their grief in spite of the ridicule of the brutal mob. As the ancient father, Chrysostom, said, "On this occasion the weaker sex proved themselves the stronger." The jeers and taunts of the scurvy populace meant nothing to them. They loved Him and they expressed their love in an unbounded way.

III

HERE IS HATRED

See it in the faces of these human vultures clustered on the slope of Golgotha. They are dehumanized by their hatred. They are carrying out to its last dreadful consummation their spite against Him who denounced their dishonesty and trickery, practiced under pretense of religion. They stretch out their scrawny necks. One can see their ugly muscles

twitch. Their noses are hooked and humped and their fierce eyes gleam under their bushy eyebrows. They have on them the mark of Cain.

One sees the priests. Their paunches are crammed. Their hearts are arid. Their great ears are hairy. Their thick lips hang about gaping mouths. They are craters of blasphemy. Yonder are the scribes. They are blear-eyed and scrofulous.

They are the piecers together of lies. They belch out pus and ink. The Epulones are there. They trade on hunger and fatten on famine. They convert into money the patience of the poor, the beauty of virgins and the sweat of slaves. These we have just described are the pillars of society; they are in the front row; they occupy the box seats. Behind them you see the whole mob of whining beggars, filthy knaves, cheating scullions, overbearing rascals, foul-mouthed rogues. These are the enemies of Christ. They hate Him. Here they celebrate their infamous saturnalia. They rage against Him, who was forgiving them. They vomit out their poisonous saliva against Him who was dying for them. Here is hatred. Hell itself blushed for them. These men out-deviled the devil.

IV

HERE IS ATONEMENT

"When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride."

Here is redemption for men.

There is a beautiful legend that long before Christ came to earth to die for us, He was accustomed to look over the parapets of heaven and say to His Father, "Is it not yet time for me to go; is it not time now?" He came lovingly and paid fully the

price for our sin. What passed in His soul is not given to blind and feeble men to know, but because of what He did on Calvary, sinful men are able to find peace with a righteous God without losing, on one hand a sense of the heinousness of sin, nor on the other a sense of the righteousness of God. Here is "at-one-ment," the bringing together of sinful men with the righteous God through the loving, full and free sacrifice of Jesus Christ. No philosopher, no poet, no thinker of any time or age can explain just what happened there, but, thank God, we know that because of what He did there, we are justified, forgiven, redeemed and saved, if we will but accept Him in love, repentance and faith.

Chapter XIV

"THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS"

(From the Painting by Rubens)

Scripture Lesson: *Mark 15:22-27; 42-47.*

There is a story of a riotous mob in the French Revolution which burst into one of the great art galleries and, rushing through on their mission of destruction, plunged headlong into a large room at the end of which hung Munkacsy's picture of Christ upon the Cross. The silent eloquence of that picture caused the mob to retreat and silently to shut the door behind them, awed, and overpowered by the spell of the Saviour's look.

It is certain that Rubens' picture, "The Descent from the Cross," has cast over a multitude of hearts a spell of similar intensity. It is in the Cathedral of Notre Dame at Antwerp. Many of his triptychs are there. This cathedral contains also "The Assumption," but "The Descent from the Cross," with its companion piece, "The Ascent to the Cross," are by far the most widely known, the most greatly admired, and the most moving of all the pictures in this ancient cathedral. "The Descent from the Cross" was painted in 1612 just two years after the painting of "The Ascent to the Cross." One can see the two great masterpieces of Rubens only at stated hours, when the cathedral is closed to the faithful, and the curtains which ordinarily veil those two world famous pictures are removed for the convenience and benefit of visitors. The pictures hang

at either side of the altar. There is almost always a crowd of copyists seated before "The Descent from the Cross." It is interesting to note that very few are seated before "The Ascent to the Cross." Artists agree that this is one of the world's greatest art productions. It is utterly impossible to imagine "The Descent from the Cross" otherwise than as Rubens has conceived it. He discovered the unforgettable. He wrought out in the intensity of his own spiritual devotion, the unchangeable and definite form under which, as in a melodious and touching dirge, the passion of Christ was to be fixed in the thought and feeling of men.

The Artist.

Peter Paul Rubens was born in the little town of Siegen, in Westphalia, in 1577. Both Cologne and Antwerp have laid claim to the distinction of being his birthplace but scholars are agreed that the fact is as above stated. In 1600 he became court painter to the Duke Gonzaga. In 1603 he was appointed the Duke's ambassador to Philip the third of Spain. The year 1608 finds him in Rome. In 1609 he married Isabella Brant, who henceforward figures in his paintings as the ideal type of beautiful womanhood. In 1629 he was sent to England as the mediary between Philip the fourth and Charles the first. Rubens was a courtly man, distinguished for his genial personality, his inexhaustible wit, his pleasing and unfailing tact. He was gifted no less as an ambassador than as an artist. He excelled in both realms. He was master diplomat. His last days were spent in wealth and honor in his palace at Antwerp. His first wife having died he married Helene Fourment, a very beautiful lady of the middle class. He declared to his friends that he did not select a princess, as many expected him to do,

as he wanted a wife who would not be ashamed of of him with the paint brush in his hand. His selection was most wise. She was as devoted and efficient a wife as had been his first. Most of his female characters are composites drawn from the leading characteristics of these two beautiful women.

The best life of Rubens is by H. Knackfuss, translated by Louise M. Richter. This is a beautiful monograph.

The Picture.

Nowhere does Rubens' mastery of chiaroscuro manifest itself more admirably and delightfully than in his picture under our thought. In the original the colors are dark green, almost black, pure black, dull red, and white. Most of the prints that one sees are not true to the color of the original. The background is intensely black. It is night. All is over and silent. Christ looks like some beautiful flower, plucked and withered. Against the blackness there stands out in dazzling whiteness the sudarium, or winding sheet, in which the limp body of the Saviour is being lowered. The grief of the picture is intense beyond the power of language to describe. There is no violent manifestation of it. There is no waving of arms. There are no cries. There are scarcely any tears. The scene is powerful and gripping. Everything is restrained, concise, laconic, as if it were a page of Holy Scripture. The virgin does not sob, but the intensity of her grief is shown by her expression of unconsolable sorrow. It is exquisite grief, too deep for words. A friend of the author reports, returning from a study of this picture, as he advanced toward it, he found a little German scholar fanning himself staccato and dancing up and down in sheer exuberance of feeling as he cried out in German and English, "What master-

ful expression of sorrow." One's feelings, as one looks at the picture, are mingled. There is keen sense of delight that a master painter has been able to catch, and fix upon the canvas, so vivid a portrayal of this tragic scene. But, for most people, this feeling is overcome by an excess of reverence, that inclines one to bow the head in the presence of this piteous scene.

The execution of the detail of the picture is testimony to the supremacy of Rubens' art. Here is grace and exhausted anguish in the limp form of the Saviour. As the body is received into the arms of John, the foot, bruised and bluish in tint, just touches the shoulder of Mary Magdalene. Mary of Bethany, who is just behind Mary Magdalene, falls to her knees, while Mary the mother of Jesus, reaches up with outstretched hands, as though to assist in the reception of the body. Just above Mary the mother of Christ, the artist has represented Joseph of Arimathea, holding the winding sheet with his right hand, while with his left, he supports the arm of the descending Saviour. At the upper left hand of the picture, Zaccheus is leaning over the arm of the cross, while in a similar position on the right hand of the picture is Nicodemus. Peter is descending the ladder, while as I have said, John is receiving the body in his arms. These characters are doubly interesting for us because, in this picture, Rubens carried out to the very fullest the plan which he so often employed in part, namely: that of painting his characters in accordance with real individuals. The figure of Mary Magdalene is a portrait of his wife, Isabella Brant. Mary of Bethany is a reproduction of his sister. The picture of Mary the mother of Christ is a portrait of the artist's own mother. Joseph

of Arimathea is a faithful portrayal of the Mayor of Antwerp; Zaccheus, a portrait of the artist's friend, Van Dyke, while Nicodemus is a portrait of Jordans, another painter and pupil of Rubens. The figures of Peter and of John are the portraits of pupils of Rubens.

This representation of Christ is one of the finest in the art of the world. In his later life, and in much of his finest work, Rubens delegated a large part of the actual painting of his pictures to his students, retouching and adding a few details here and there. He was always perfectly frank in this matter. Those who purchased his pictures paid so much for a certain amount of his work and more for a larger amount of his own personal attention. This picture, however, is entirely the work of the great master. He conceived it, drew it in sketch form, and it represents, in its entirety, the work of his own hand.

What Is in the Picture?

I

HERE IS REMORSE

It is evident in the face of Joseph and in the face of Nicodemus. It is perfectly true that they were courageous enough to take His part in a somewhat ineffectual way in the Sanhedrin. It is also true that they displayed splendid courage in insisting upon an interview with Pilate on a day when he was, without doubt, difficult to interview, and they were bold enough to urge their request for the body of Christ. It is perfectly true that they manifested splendid devotion and real affection in their care of the body after His death; but it is also true that their attitude toward Him during His life brought to them at His death the keenest remorse. It is evi-

dent in the face of each man. They had been only secret followers! Why had they not had the courage to openly espouse His cause, and to boldly and publicly take their stand on His side during the days of His life?

What a challenge it is to us. Every day that we delay, means another day spent away from Him. It means lost opportunity for us and lost time for Him. Of course, it is better to come to Him late than not come at all. But how pitiful it is to give Him the burnt out end of the candle. How tragic it is to give to Him the tag end of life. How selfish it it to wait until the day is nearly spent before we give ourselves into His keeping. "Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth" is a word we do well to remember. Christ desires and welcomes every life, but the young life that comes to Him is doubly valuable. When an old man is converted, a unit is saved; when a young person is converted, a multiplication table is saved.

II

HERE IS RESTRAINT

As has been pointed out, one of the most unmistakable marks of genius in this picture is the intense grief in the faces of the characters, yet with all the steady restraint. There is no wild grief on the part of these loved ones.

There is a word that should be said very frankly and with intense earnestness to Christian people. It is this. We do wrongly to mourn in frenzied grief at the death of our loved ones. Let no one accuse the writer of hardheartedness. The tears cannot be restrained. The sorrow of the heart cannot, with a gesture of the hand, be waved aside. "He knoweth

our frame, and remembereth that we are dust." Human nature is weak, and will give expression to its sorrow in time of bereavement. It is natural, and God intended that it should be this way. It is not this that the writer has in mind.

At a recent funeral everything had been said and done to bring to a Christian family the consolation of the Gospel of Christ. The minister had spoken in the most heartfelt and deeply sympathetic way. The family, however, at a critical point, gave free reign to the wildest and most exaggerated outburst of frenzied, violent grief. The funeral director turned to the minister and said, "I do not understand why people send for a Christian minister if they intend to ignore his words and conduct themselves like heathens." Let us not be misunderstood. What we are saying is exactly what Paul said long ago, "Sorrow not as those who have no hope." If Christ means anything to us; if our connection with Him is real and vital; if our faith in His resurrection is steadfast, we will not give ourselves over to a wild desolation of grief, but, through our tears and with aching heart, will strengthen ourselves because of our faith in Him and because of His indwelling in our hearts. We are not to mourn as those who have no hope, because we do have hope, and to behave as heathen people is to dishonor our Saviour, and to discredit our faith.

One of the most beautiful experiences in the ministry of the writer happened not long ago when a devoted Christian family lost a splendid son. Their grief, of course, was extreme. The day following the funeral service, which was held at church, the entire family was seated in their accustomed place. When the hymn was announced, the minister noticed that the book held in the hands of the mother and

the father trembled exceedingly—*but they were both singing!* This is faith. This is Christianity. This is as it should be.

III

HERE IS CONTRAST

The artist has given to us, in the shades of darkness and the blinding light in this picture, the contrasts of sin and salvation. Rubens is trying to tell us that, even though dead, there glows from Christ the light of salvation. That's the meaning of the great blaze of white that strikes across the very center of the picture, dazzling in its intensity, almost blinding in its brilliance. Rubens is saying to us that Christ is still God even while his body is being enfolded in the sudarium. Christ's death on the cross gives sinful men peace with a righteous God. This is not philosophy. This is not theory. It is not even theology. It is a veritable fact. Eternal fact. It cannot be explained. It can only be experienced. It is operating in the world today.

IV

HERE IS PERFECTION

This is the end of His earthly life. Perfectly sinless, perfectly obedient, He fulfilled His Father's will. Coming to the earth a unique personality, He died a unique death; and His death was crowned by a unique testimony of the favor and approval of God, namely: the Resurrection. There are many glib speakers and superficial thinkers these days who are arguing against the Virgin Birth. One wonders if it is not due to a failure on their part to take into account the whole marvel of the life of Christ—His unique place on the boards of time! He was the One Flawless Diamond of human history,

the priceless possession of the race—the only sinless Man. From the standpoint of logic, it is absurd to say that this strange life, this unique personality should be explained in its emergence in the same terms in which the emergence of every other personality is explained. Scientifically speaking, it is utterly absurd. So far from being unscientific, the Virgin Birth is the *only* scientific explanation of the emergence of the personality of Christ. One of the basic axioms of scientific inquiry and study is this: a unique event presupposes a unique cause. If Christ was sinless—which even his enemies were forced to admit—it is utterly unscientific to explain His emergence in the same terms in which the emergence of ordinary men and women is explained.

Perfection eludes us. If you would ask why, Browning would reply:

> "Ask that particular devil
> Whose task it is to trip the all
> But at perfection—stop the work of the painter just
> Where paint leaves off and life begins—
> Put ice into the lines o' the poet when he
> Cries 'Next Stanza Fire!'—inscribe all human
> Effort with artistry's lamenting curse—
> The Incomplete!"

but perfection did not elude Christ.

One recalls Sidney Lanier's tribute after reviewing all of the great leaders of the race. He finds in each one much that is to be forgiven until he comes to Jesus Christ. Then he says:

> "But Thee, but Thee, O sovereign Seer of time,
> But Thee, O poets' Poet, Wisdom's Tongue,
> But Thee, O man's best Man, O love's best Love.
> O perfect life in perfect labor writ,
> O all men's Comrade, Servant, King, or Priest,—
> What if or yet, what mole, what flaw, what lapse,
> What least defect or shadow of defect,
> What rumor, tattled by an enemy,

> Of inference loose, what lack of grace
> Even in torture's grasp, or sleep's, or death's,—
> Oh, what amiss may I forgive in Thee,
> Jesus, good Paragon, thou Crystal Christ."

I am saying that here is perfection absolute.

And finally

V

HERE IS VICTORY

(a) Over Self.

Notice the bowl of wine in the lower right hand corner of the picture. The ladies of Jerusalem had a benevolent custom of providing for those condemned for crucifixion a soporific drink composed of wine mingled with some narcotic like gall or myrrh, intended to deaden the senses and dull the pain. As Christ stood ready to be crucified, these kind-hearted ladies offered Him the cup containing this mixture. Utterly worn and exhausted, He eagerly grasped it and pressed it, unsuspectingly to His lips. However, as soon as He had tasted it, He put it aside and would not drink. He recognized at once the fumes of the stupifying ingredients. He was determined not to dull His senses. If this was the penalty that He was to pay for redemption of man, He would pay it to the very last, and in full possession of His faculties. Here is victory over Himself.

(b) Here Is Victory, Also, Over His Enemies.

It is a magnificent touch of technique and imagination that Rubens has given us, in putting the crown of thorns, also, in the right hand corner of the picture. His enemies had done their worst. How futile their rage; how empty and meaningless their revenge. They might crown Him with thorns and nail Him to the cross. They might take from Him, momentarily, His life, but little did they know that they were dealing with One who was Lord and

Master of life. Here is victory, even in the moment of death, over His enemies.

(c) Here Is Victory Over the Grave.

Rubens has indicated the title, which had been nailed at the head of the cross, removed and weighted down with a stone. It lies beside the basin and the crown of thorns. It is the title that declared Him king, and Rubens is declaring to us that though stones may be piled upon Him, no stone is able to imprison Him. It is a dramatic foreshadowing of the resurrection; of the rolled-back stone; of the broken grave, of the final victory of Christ. It looks as though death had conquered. His body is limp. The stone lies on the paper that had proclaimed Him king, but there are at work in the universe forces of infinite power, and the great artist preacher is declaring to us that though the body appears dead and the stone rests upon the title, He is still king, and will, in His own time, manifest His power. This is the message of Rubens' picture "The Descent from the Cross." May God bless us as we think upon these things.

Chapter XV

"HE IS RISEN"

(From the Painting by Plockhorst)

TEXTS: *"Who shall roll us away the stone?"—Mark 16:3.*
"He is risen."—Mark 16:6.
"Behold the place where they laid him."—John 20:16.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: *Mark 16:1-8.*

The Easter festival is the high point in the church's life. It is the time of intense spiritual experience, a time of rededication and renewal of life. As one stands on the threshold of the tomb of Joseph, it is evident that tremendous forces have been at work. It is impossible to describe one's feelings or the facts from which these feelings spring in any ordinary measurements of life. An intelligent Christian faith demands, however, that these facts be considered and that we at least attempt to enter intelligently into an understanding of them. We dare not ignore them. To do so is to insult the intelligence with which God has endowed us. To deny them, on the other hand, is to insult the spirit of open-minded scientific inquiry. Huxley once said to his students, "We must sit down before every fact like little children." Facts are facts, whether they be chemical reaction in a test tube or the spirits of just men made perfect. Schleiermacher declared, "A regenerated man is a fact as worthy of scientific study as a field of potatoes." That is simply a beautiful way of stating that there are high facts and low facts, simple facts and profound facts, earthly

facts and heavenly facts. The lowest and simplest fact is to be treated with profound respect.

In the presence, then, of the Easter fact—that supreme and lofty fact of love and life, of spirit and of the invisible forces, what shall be the attitudes of thoughtful men and women? What are the moods of Easter? What actions and reactions occur in the soul as we stand in the dazzling presence of the Easter fact?

No one has portrayed these moods of Easter more vividly or charmingly than Plockhorst in his picture, "He is Risen." The scene is at the tomb. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome are there.

What Is in the Picture?

Here is

I

BEWILDERMENT

With consummate skill the artist has stamped this mood upon the face of Salome. This is the first Easter mood. These dawn-women set out in bewilderment; bewilderment at the whole meaning of the trying scenes through which they have passed; bewilderment at his death; bewilderment as to the moving of the stone; bewilderment as to the meaning of death. Bewilderment is the first and lowest of the Easter moods. It haunted the hearts of these love-garmented women as, with strong faith, but weak hands, they set out for the tomb, and now, standing in the presence of the angel's glad announcement, the face of Salome still bears the imprint of her bewilderment.

We do well to be bewildered in the presence of such mysteries as life and death. Only to the fool, is everything clear. What is death? No philosopher, no scientist can answer except to say that it is the

absence of life. This strange new stillness on the face of one we knew and loved! The unresponsiveness where before we had found eager and glad answer! Someone has moved out. Only the cold tenement is left, vacant and dismal. These are mysteries to bewilder the wisest. Only shallow souls will treat them flippantly. But in God, through Christ, we know that life is master of death. Death seems to outwit life. He stalks like a conqueror through the palace and leaves a vacant chair. He pulls down the shade at the window and shuts out the sun. In the shadow cast by the vacant chair the words flash out on the wall, "If a man die, shall he live again?" The resurrection tomb is the answer to our bewilderment. Whittier spoke the truth in a beautiful way when he said:

"Yet Love will dream, and Faith will trust,
(Since He who knows our need is just,)
That somehow, somewhere, meet we must.
Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress-trees!
Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play!
Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
That Life is ever lord of Death,
And Love can never lose its own!"

Whittier could never have written these lines had he been unfamiliar with the resurrection tomb. "Who will roll us away the stone?" The answer is in the tomb itself. The stone has been rolled away and the tomb is vacant.

Here is also in the picture,

II

AMAZEMENT

What is the angel saying? "He is risen." These words beget in the heart of Mary, the mother of

James, the second Easter mood, which is Amazement. Plockhorst has stamped on her face the breathless gaze of tip-toe wonder. Almost in fear, she lays her hand upon the breast of Salome. The Easter message is big with amazement.

Hearing the angel's glad announcement, "He is not here; he is risen," is there not sufficient cause for surpassing awe? These words are enough to fan forever the consuming flame of wonder in the hearts of mortals. They did well to be amazed, and we have been amazed ever since. The fact is we live in the midst of a great spiritual order. This universe is fundamentally and ultimately, not material or physical, but spiritual. In the last few years the essentially spiritual nature of the universe has been making itself powerfully felt. The air has always been full of electricity. Only recently, however, has it been used and not yet has it been accurately defined. The atmosphere has always been full of sounds. Only recently, though, have we caught them, and now scientists declare it may be possible to make instruments so delicate as to pick up sounds and voices released hundreds of years ago. It is not impossible that we may again hear the words of Christ as he gave utterance to the words of the Sermon on the Mount. We are like children reaching our hands into grab bags to pull out strange and new treasures. Men are discovering more of nature's secrets and utilizing more of her strange forces today than ever before in all the history of the world. No one knows what we will discover next. The veil between the physical and spiritual is wearing extremely thin and we are making the discovery that this universe is essentially spiritual.

Thompson declares in his "Outline of Science," "The very dust has a complexity that baffles us."

If this is true of the dust underneath our feet, it is probable that the spirit may continue to perplex us for some time to come! The resurrection tomb is Christ's glad announcement to the world that the spiritual forces are the predominant and ultimately victorious forces in the universe. It awakened amazement in the hearts of these women. It has never ceased to create wonder and will do so until that glad day when we, too, shall arise with bodies incorruptible, like to His glorious body according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. As the swallow is made for flying, so is the soul of man made for the spiritual world, and of this we are becoming increasingly aware.

We have heard the call of the Master; we go in answer. We have dreamed of golden shores; we go in search. We have sensed fields of undecaying green and of peace that passeth understanding; we go to prove our dreams and ourselves. "He is risen." This is the second Easter mood, that of Amazement. But there is a third Easter mood evident in this masterpiece of Plockhorst's. It is

III

EXULTATION

It is gloriously expressed in the face and figure of Mary Magdalene as she kneels in adoration and in glad praise. It is expressed also in the words of the angel, "Behold the place where the Lord lay." The tense of that expression is eloquent. It is past —"where the Lord lay." He is there no longer. Consider three things in this connection.

1. Christ arose. "I believe there is no fact in history better attested than our Lord's resurrection," says Dr. Speer. "It rests upon evidences as strong as any other evidences that we have of any

other event—as strong as the evidence we have for what took place on July 4, 1776. And I believe that we may rest as securely on the evidence of the resurrection as we may on the evidences that there was ever a Declaration of Independence.

"You say we have it now. I say we have a living Christ now. You say men saw it signed. I say men saw Him rise. You say there is a nation living whose existence testifies to the Declaration of Independence. I say there is a kingdom of Christ in existence that bears witness to the fact that something lifted it out of the death in which it lay when He hung upon His cross. It was saved by nothing less than His rising again from the dead. Without a risen Christ there is no adequate explanation of the resurrection of Christianity. You say this historic evidence does not satisfy everyone. I say it convinces all who would be convinced if they saw Him rise with their own eyes."

2. He arose unaided. He was not dependent upon physical forces. The earthquake was no part of His machinery of resurrection. It was simply a part of the demonstration of His accomplished victory. The stone was not rolled away to let Him out. It was rolled away to show that He was already out. No one helped Him go. He was dependent upon neither the angel nor the earthquake. All they did was help people come and see the place where He once had lain.

3. He arose physically. It was not purely a spiritual resurrection. The trouble with this way of explaining it is that there is nothing left to wonder about or to revolutionize the thinking of the disciples. These men were Jews and to them the thought of a spiritual resurrection had long been a commonplace. Paul knew that death did not destroy the personality. Something happened in the

case of Jesus which utterly changed the attitude and viewpoint of these Jewish followers of His. Something happened that was unique, unprecedented, prophetic. Jesus had returned in a way in which they had not expected, in a way they had not believed, with a certainty which spiritual assurance could never have given them. Paul names Christ's death, burial and resurrection in the same breath. To argue that he means physical death and burial but only spiritual resurrection makes a tangle of the whole argument. Here is resurrection of the body, a reappearance in life of the body that had been dead, as well as the reassertion of the spirit that had passed through the event of death.

It was a resurrection body with which Christ returned. It was the same kind of body as believers will have when raised up in glory at the last day. It was a body that had all of the powers of His former body, with none of the limitations thereof. It cannot be called a spiritual body, for such an expression is a contradiction of terms. A thing cannot be spirit and body at the same time. It was a resurrection body.

What an hour of exultation that was! Dr. Frederick F. Shannon has given us what he imagines must have been the confession of the tomb on this occasion. "'O Women of the Dawn," it says, 'be not amazed at what you behold! I, the Tomb, am the arch-deceiver of the race, and now at last I am discovered. I have kept all the generations in bondage up to this good hour. From the cradle, little children have been taught to approach me with fear; the monarch on his throne has turned pale as thoughts of me flashed through his mind; the philosopher boasted of his knowledge until I lifted my finger, and then he grew meekly still; my shadow has always darkened the luster of the rich man's

gold; not one born of woman but has yielded to my prowess; the billions of mankind have walked forth only to find me—vast, gloomy, unfathomable, the all-engulfing abyss of terror—standing athwart their path. But here and now, Women of the Morning, let me make my confession. I hold not the sting of death, nor is victory with me. The Lord of Life, the King of Glory, yielded Himself to my dark embrace. I thought that I had conquered even Him, and that was the proudest moment of my long career of conquest. But I, the dark, forbidding Tomb, knew not His power. Even while He lay here in my bosom, all the dead crowded round to behold Him. So mighty was He in His terrible stillness that the citizens of realms invisible were thrown into excitement and threatened to unpeople Hades. But at last there came a shudder that made the universe quiver to its foundations, a cosmic thrill that troubled the stars; angels and archangels ceased from their anthems, devils and demons forgot to blaspheme,—and lo! the Crucified arose, laid aside the cerements of death, and walked forth from my gloom and doom, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!' "

These, then, are the glad assurances brought to us by the Easter facts. Bewilderment gives way to Amazement, and Amazement becomes Exultation. Tell it to the sorrowing heart standing by the open grave. Declare it to the mother whose little one has gone out upon the path of the unreturning. He is risen, and because of His victory you and I may go unafraid into the embrace of the tomb.

Plockhorst has added a number of delicate and vivid touches to the scene in his picture.

On the corner of the tomb there appears the crown of thorns and the robe which had been

thrown mockingly about his shoulders. From the ground there springs up the beautiful lily, symbolic of victory and of life, while in the far left background there appear dimly the outlines of the rugged cross upon which he had died.

Mary Magdalene holds in her hands the jar of ointment intended for use in embalming Him! There was no need, however, for myrrh or for spices. He was risen! The spices were flung away. Years later Mary used to tell this tale:

"How dragged those hours! A while we silent sat,
Then told again the things His hands had done,
The words His lips had spoken, great high words,
Whose wonder all the ages cannot know:
Deeds done, words spoken, all was ended now;
There lay the spices for His burial bed.
So waited we the long Passover day,
The long black night that brought no slumber near,
Ready to bear our last gift to his need.

The first gray streaks of dawning saw us forth,
Through narrow twisting streets while the city slept,
The guards scarce stirring as we passed the gate,
Bearing our precious burden, odorous, sweet,
Asking ourselves the question 'How the stone?'
The rest is like a dream: The growing light,
The quiet hillside where the new tomb lay,
The stone rolled back, the napkin laid aside,
The sickening fear that quickly turned to joy,
The face of Mary as she gasped the truth,
The eager flight to tell the amazing tale;
I know we reached the house with empty hands,
With empty hands to which rare odors clung,
Somewhere we had flung the useless myrrh away!"

THE END

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